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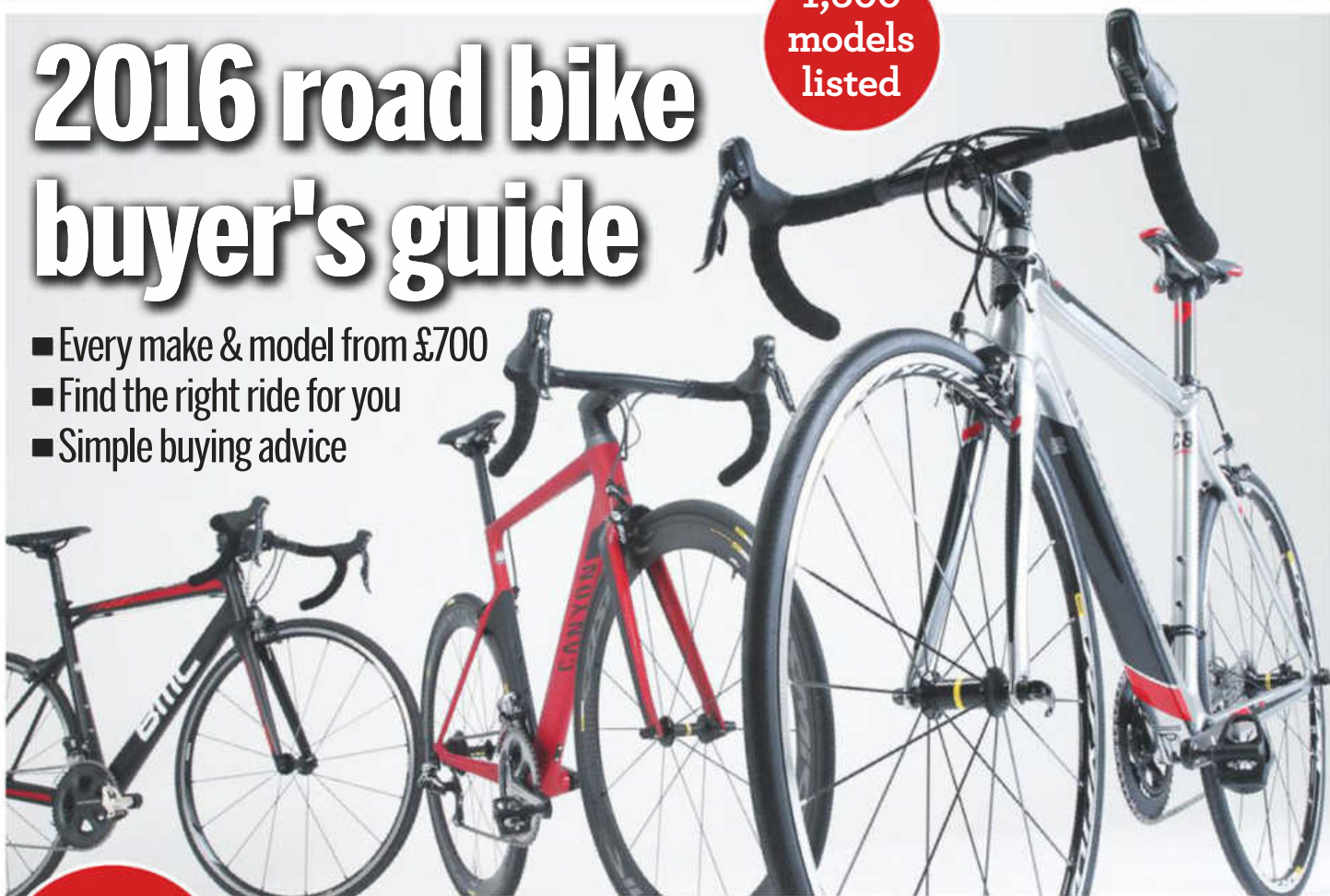
Who trains the hardest?
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We compare the disciplines



2016 road bike buyer's guide

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- Find the right ride for you
- Simple buying advice



Geraint Thomas wins in Portugal



Cycling world pays tribute to David Duffield

Evie Richards on her Worlds win

All the racing action from last week

Everything you need to know about caffeine





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March 12

Wiltshire Wildcat
Salisbury, Wiltshire

March 20

Surrey Hills Cyclone
Dorking, Surrey

April 30

Dartmoor Demon
Exeter, Devon

May 15

South Downs Spring
Plumpton, East Sussex

May 22

The Arrow
Market Rasen, Lincolnshire

June 26

Ripon Revolution
Ripon, Yorkshire

July 17

Suffolk Spinner
Ipswich, Suffolk

July 23

Malvern Mad Hatter
Worcestershire

August 27

CW 125
Tarporley, Cheshire

October 9

Box Hill Original
Cranleigh, Surrey



April 3

Moors & Shores
North Yorkshire

May 15

Grizedale Grizzly
South Lakes, Cumbria

July 10

Peak District Pioneer
Bakewell, Derbyshire

September 18

Galloway Gallop
Dumfries, Scotland

October 16

Lakeland Monster Miles
North Lakes, Cumbria



SPIN SERIES

April 2

Cobbler Classic
Brackley, Northampton

April 10

The Marches
Ludlow, Shropshire

May 14

Devils MTB
Plumpton, East Sussex



ukcyclingevents.co.uk
get out and ride

February 28

The Rocket
Amberley, Sussex

April 23

Bowland Bowbearer
Milnthorpe, Cumbria

May 7

The Fell Beast
Carlisle, Cumbria

June 4

Ridgeway Rouleur
Oxfordshire

June 19

Perth Pursuit
Perth, Scotland

July 16

Ochil Hills 100
Dunfermaline, Scotland

Sept 3

Firebreather
Dyfed, Wales

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David Duffield, we salute you

The greatest characters in any walk of life are the ones who divide opinion. David Duffield was one of those. I know some who couldn't bear to listen to him talk about cheese and wine as the break went up the road, while others fell in love with the sport because of his chatty style.

Paul Heaton of the Housemartins famously admitted to being obsessed with watching cycling due to Duffield's commentary.

Whenever a bike race is being shown, the TV in the CW office is on. Like every other sports fan in the world we enjoy shouting at it. Sometimes it's because they cut to the wrong camera, but mostly it's because the commentator has just said something wrong, or a bit daft.

Duffield's list of daft sayings is hugely entertaining, and we've all got our own favourite. It's currently doing the rounds online, and is well worth a read.

The fact is, commentating is a tough job. I once spent an hour in the Eurosport commentary box with David Harmon at the 2006 World Championships road race. It was the second hour of the race and nothing, I mean *nothing*, happened. But we still had to fill the airtime. Duffield often did that, on his own, for several hours.

He was also a successful tricyclist and was instrumental in Halford's

bringing BMX culture to the UK.

He will be missed.

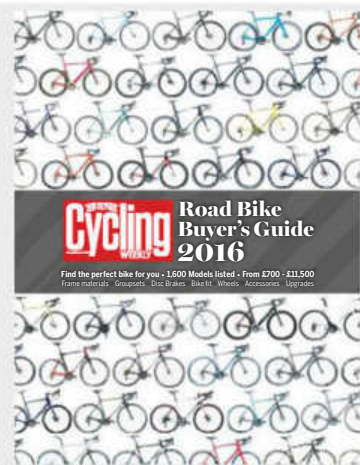
Simon Richardson
Editor



Photos: Russell Ellis, Daniel Gould

Buyer's guide

- Every road bike from £700
- 1,600 models listed
- Simple buying advice
- Groupsets in depth
- Frame materials explained



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Which cyclists get the highest
CW suffer score? See p44



Cobbles and climbs at the
Lincoln GP sportive, p54



Thomas lays down marker in the Algarve

Portuguese win highlights Welshman's Grand Tour promise

Nick Bull

Sky's Geraint Thomas underlined his stage race credentials by winning the Tour of the Algarve on Sunday.

The 29-year-old became the first rider since Alberto Contador in 2010 to win back-to-back titles in the five-day Portuguese event, achieving the feat at the last thanks to a battling final stage performance that ended atop the second-category Alto do Malhão climb.

With the Welshman's likely Tour de France contenders, namely team-mate Chris Froome, Tejay van Garderen (BMC), Romain Bardet (Ag2r La Mondiale) and Tinkoff's Contador (who won the final Algarve stage), all showing good form in the opening weeks of the season, Thomas's victory helps underline his transformation from Classics star to stage racer.

"It's always nice to be on the podium and get a win," said Thomas of his fourth professional stage race victory. "I don't get to do it very often so I certainly enjoy that. It's definitely a good confidence booster.

"I didn't know what to expect. I think this year there was more pressure, coming here as the leader of the team and as a previous winner. Last year I was with Richie Porte as a second leader, so it was a bonus to win.

"To deal with that pressure [in this year's race], have the boys riding for me, it's really nice to finish the job."

For the third year running, Thomas will skip this Saturday's Omloop Het Nieuwsblad, the Spring Classics curtain-raiser in which he placed fourth in 2013.

His next competitive start comes at Paris-Nice (March 6-13), a race he led for two days in 2014 and helped then team-mate Porte to win last year.

A busy two-month schedule will also include the Tour of Catalonia (March 21-27) and Tour of Romandy (April 26-May 1). Milan-San Remo, the Tour of Flanders and Liège-Bastogne-Liège are the only one-day races on his current programme, highlighting his change in focus for 2016.

"It's slightly different to normal, but it's a big block," Thomas added. "Three big stage races and then three big one-days as well. Hopefully I can take something out of all that."

■ See pages 64-69 for our in-depth racing section, and also next Thursday's CW for an exclusive Geraint Thomas interview.

MY VIEW...

Richard Abraham

Cycling Weekly news writer

The Tour de France is a long way away, so let's not get too excited by a five-day event in February. However, by winning the Tour of the Algarve, Geraint Thomas has already proved himself capable of passing one of the biggest tests he'll face this season: expectation.



David Duffield

1931-2016

Tribute to legendary cycling commentator

Richard Abraham

Tributes have been paid to long-standing cycling commentator and 'ultimate enthusiast,' David Duffield, who passed away on Sunday February 21, aged 84, following a fall.

Duffield was the unmistakable voice of cycling thanks to his commentary work for Eurosport. His memorable lines delivered in his characteristic Midlands accent introduced millions across Europe to the sport of cycling between the 1990s and 2000s.

Duffield was also a multiple tricycle record holder, setting benchmarks ranging from 50 to 1,000 miles and Lands End to John o' Groats during a racing career that spanned two decades. He also carried out pioneering work in the bicycle industry, helping to launch the ground-breaking small-wheeled Moulton bicycle in the 1960s and helping to instigate the launch of Raleigh's range of BMX bikes.

"David Duffield used to take you on holiday," said his former commentary colleague Carlton Kirby. "A lot of people never used to watch any cycling except for the Tour de France, and when they watched the Tour de France they wanted to listen to David Duffield, on long, four-hour stretches."

"It would be difficult to underestimate what David did for the Moulton bike project," said Dan Farrell, technical director at Moulton Bicycles. "Everyone in the industry knew him, and he was one of those people with whom the enthusiasm was always there."

At six foot four in height and with a distinctive laugh, former colleagues have remembered an old-school *bon viveur* who continued to use a fax machine well into the age of email (insisting that his Eurosport bosses use the fax machine in a nearby stationers in order to send him race start-sheets) and who maintained a habit of dining at appropriate restaurants before commenting on foreign races from the UK.

"It was a bugger trying to find Polish restaurants a few years ago but he was

hunting them down so he had this flavour in his head and then he could translate it and start discussing his steamed sauerkraut," Kirby added.

Born in 1931, Duffield's first entry into the cycling history books was as a highly regarded tricycle racer. Beginning with the 12-hour record in 1955 and ending with his final record, London to Bath and back, in 1971, his career saw him hold a dozen Road Records Association trike benchmarks, including two End-to-Ends.

His work for Moulton involved organising John Woodburn's record-breaking ride from Cardiff to London in December 1962. He also orchestrated the machines' competitive track debut in April 1963 when, at a meet at the Coventry velodrome, a Moulton team set a new track record for the 4,000m team pursuit.

In 1978 while working for Raleigh he supplied 65 bikes to appear in Queen's music video for 'Bicycle Race'. In recognition of his achievements across the cycling world he was awarded the FT Bidlake Memorial Prize in 1998.

"David existed at a time when cycling was emerging as a popular sport and he, because of his nature, drew in a lot of people who wouldn't really have been there otherwise," Kirby added. "That will be his true epitaph, he introduced a lot of people to a sport that we all love."

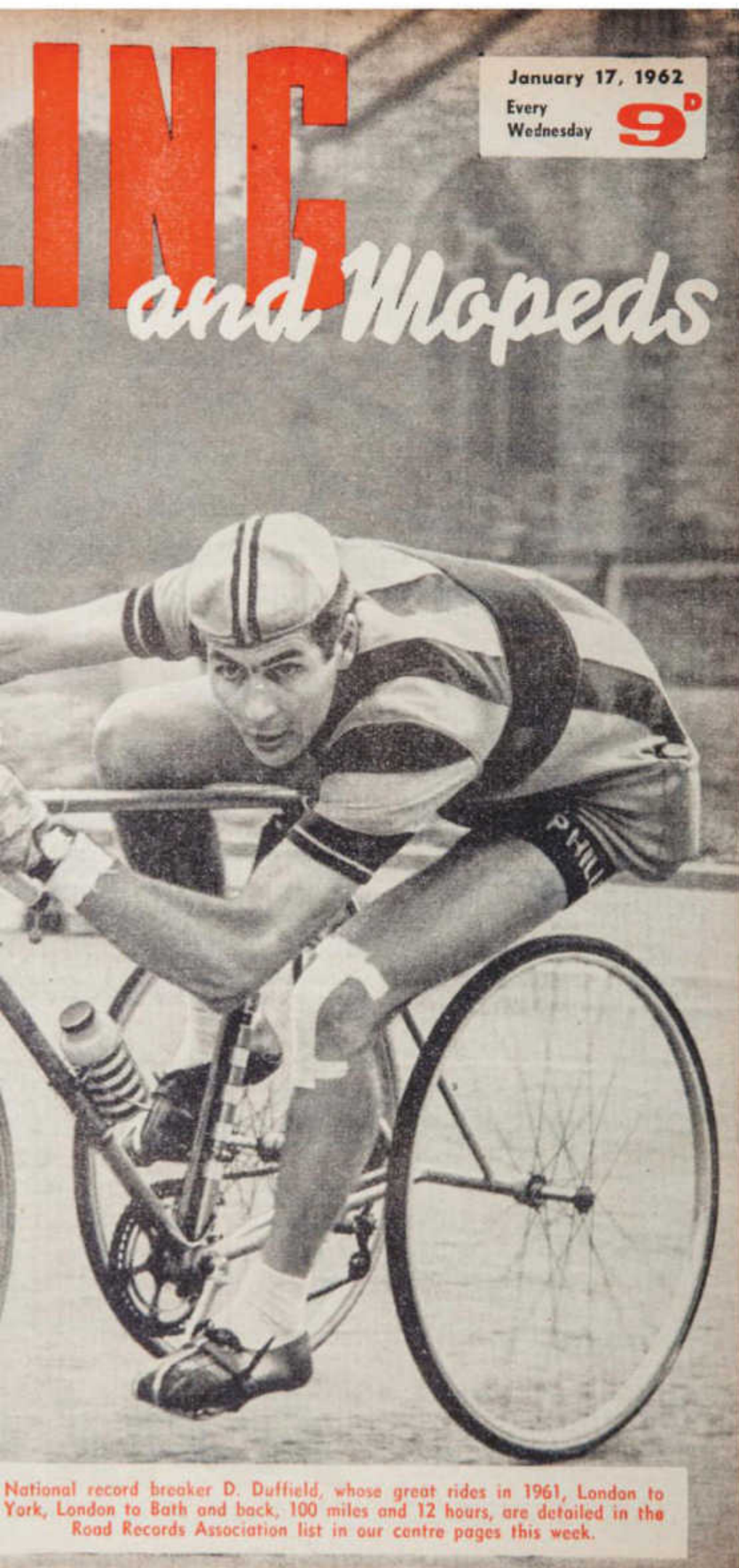


MY VIEW...

Nick Bull

Cycling Weekly news writer

David Duffield was one of the reasons I fell in love with cycling. While other commentators would talk about that day's race endlessly, seemingly at times for the sake of it, Duffield's detours into the local geography, food and drink made watching the sport both entertaining and educational. Somewhat in awe when I met him a decade or so ago (I even asked for his autograph, something I never do), he seemed flattered that I'd turned up to a bike race with a sign saying "Chapeau, David!" as opposed to one bearing the names of the professionals in action. He was as charismatic in person as he was behind the microphone, his style irreverent and unique. The cycling world is a poorer place without him.



National record breaker D. Duffield, whose great rides in 1961, London to York, London to Bath and back, 100 miles and 12 hours, are detailed in the Road Records Association list in our centre pages this week.

The very best Duffieldisms

David Duffield was well known for his memorable commentary one-liners. We remember some of his very best 'Duffieldisms'.

"Look down the valley...if you've got vertigo, sort of... don't look down the valley!"

"It's curtains for Karpets"

"I heard a rumour that Karpets was off to Quick Step, but they were worried they would tread all over him."

"This is like Wimbledon, Ascot and Silverstone all wrapped in together and plonked in the middle of Paris: amazing!"

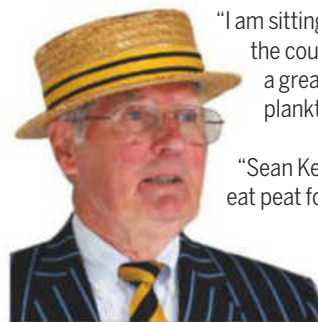
"If you've got a grandmother in a wheelchair, now's the time to take her for a walk so she needn't see this!"

"He's like a rough end of a ragman's trumpet."

"We could grow rice, it's that mucky."

"The firemen are behind pumping in the coals to try to catch Argentina!"

"Laurent Fignon just got bombed by a baguette!"



"I am sitting here with my chin on the counter, my mouth open like a great big whale scooping up plankton. I am gobsmacked!"

"Sean Kelly, the man who used to eat peat for breakfast!"

"In the blue shoulders, that is Jalabert!"

David Duffield's tricycle records

- 50 miles (1959) – 1:57.04
- 100 miles (1961) – 4:22.50
- London to York (1961) – 8:55.50
- London-Bath-London (1971) – 7:10.00
- London-Cardiff-London (1959) – 7:52.00
- 12 hours (1955) – 230.75 miles
- 12 hours (1961) – 239.625 miles
- Lands End to John o' Groats (1957) – 2d 20:09.00
- Lands End to John o' Groats (1960) – 2d 10:58.29
- 1,000 miles (1956) – 3d 12:15

Canyon delays continue

Customers of German mail-order bike firm still frustrated



Sophie Hurcom

Canyon customers have continued to express their frustration with delays at the German company's new factory, which has led to hold-ups of six months for bikes to be delivered.

Despite insisting at the start of 2016 that the problems, blamed on the move to a new factory and a new computer system, would be resolved in six weeks, many customers are still awaiting delivery of bikes ordered months ago.

To add to the frustration, last week an email was accidentally sent by the company to customers wrongly stating their orders had been cancelled.

Neil Smith, from Leicestershire, ordered a Canyon Endurace CF 9.0 in October and was initially told it would be delivered four weeks later. This was then altered to March, while he is now been told the delivery

date is in April. "It's a bit of a shambles," he told *Cycling Weekly*. "There are no clear answers on anything."

Calling the situation "tiresome" Smith admitted he is considering cancelling his order.

"The 2017 bikes will be coming out within months of me receiving it," he said.

Another customer told CW they had cancelled their order after becoming fed up with waiting and being "messed around".

In an email sent to customers this week, Canyon CEO Roman Arnold admitted the company had "failed to deliver the level of service" it stands for. "All these problems, while unintentional, were our responsibility," he said, "and I deeply regret how many of you have been affected."

Arnold insists the situation has "dramatically improved" and that the issues with the new system and production are getting better each day.

Weekly column
Rob Hayles



"This was like waving a vintage leather toe strap in front of a junior and them dropping to their knees with excitement"

Every year, Mrs Hayles and one of her very good friends, Katy, take on a different physical challenge. This year they have entered themselves into the Eroica Britannia, the third edition of the event on these shores. In case you don't know, the ethos of the Eroica is all about the passion of the bicycle and its heritage. Every entrant must ride in clothing and on bikes that predate 1987.

To many of the younger and newer generation of cyclists, it's all well past its sell-by date. But let's face it, without the old steel laid-back frames, double clanger front mechs and merino wool jerseys, we wouldn't have exotic composites, wireless shifting or, er, merino wool jerseys!

What happens at the Eroica isn't far off what I saw on a night out last week. My nearest and dearest took me out into Manchester for my belated birthday surprise, and boy was I in for a treat. All I was told was to meet the wife in town, with an overnight bag and some stepping out clothes.

We checked in to our hotel, had dinner then later on walked round the corner and joined a long queue of excited partygoers. Where had she brought me? To the Hacienda revival, celebrating the famous Manchester dance club, which closed in 1997. Now, unlike most of the Eroica's participants, the crowd here included a lot of the younger generation. They all needed ID. We, on the other hand, were waved through the entrance unchecked. How would these youths react to old and outdated dance music?

Well, when Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love' dropped at around 1am, they all went crazy. This was like waving a vintage Alfredo Binda leather toe strap in front of a junior and them dropping to their knees with excitement. In cycling terms, it just wouldn't happen. But here in Manchester's Albert Hall, late teens were mixing it with people 30 years or more their senior. It was a great experience.

Saying that, one of the best sights was the building's architecture — it's a fantastic venue. Although, just like the significance of the kit on show at the Eroica, I'm sure that also went unnoticed by the youth of today.

Former double world track champion, Rob Hayles is a pundit for TV and radio. He's also a coffee connoisseur and garden shed inventor

Nibali wins in Oman

Astana rider returns to form with decisive early-season victory

Gregor Brown in Muscat

After a disappointing 2015, Vincenzo Nibali laid down a marker in the build-up to May's Giro d'Italia by winning the six-day Tour of Oman last week.

The 31-year-old Astana rider moved into the leader's red jersey after taking victory in the race's decisive fourth stage to Jabal Al Akhdhar — better known as Green Mountain — on Friday, and held it to the race end.

Italians call Nibali *Lo Squalo* — the Shark — and his performance in Oman suggests he's hungry to put last year's poor Tour de France title defence and Vuelta disqualification behind him.

"It was hard last year because after I won the Tour, I had a lot of pressure," he told *CW*. "At any race, people thought that they'd see the Vincenzo from the Tour [in 2014, which he won], but I was far off. That's the truth.

"Since I turned pro, I always tried to ride strongly from the start until the end of the season. The last two years, I began slowly because of the Tour. I was more relaxed — which is a mistake.

"I think that you like to see Vincenzo always on the attack. But it is not always easy — I suffer."

With Fabio Aru likely to lead Astana at this year's Tour de France, Nibali's main season target is a second Giro victory in four years.

He and trainer Paolo Slongo have planned for a strong start to 2016, with March's Tirreno-Adriatico also an objective — another race he won in his successful Giro build-up in 2013.

"I had a great winter this time, and this win is the result," Nibali added.

Last year, doubts over his form lingered heavily enough that Nibali refused to talk to the press at Tirreno. Now, though, the normally approachable Sicilian appears to have returned to his old self.

"Vincenzo was always there, before, after, or during the season," he added. "I don't have anything to prove."



Oman safety questioned again

Owen Rogers in Muscat

For the second year running, there were safety concerns at the Tour of Oman, with the *gruppetto* having to ride on open roads during at least one stage of last week's event.

The most notable incident happened late in the first stage to the coastal town of Al Bustan, after the peloton had splintered over a number of climbs. Some riders were forced to navigate a series of roundabouts alongside civilian traffic.

"I was in the last group and we were on open roads," Iljo Keisse (Etixx-Quick Step) told *CW*. "We were a little way behind [the peloton] but not too much. Trucks and cars were coming our way and we had no police motorcycle behind us.

"What's going to happen if we lose 25 minutes [on one stage]?"

The incident was not an isolated one, as local police also occasionally struggled to control oncoming vehicles as they enforced the race's rolling road closure.

However, one rider who wished to remain anonymous had no problem with this, adding: "I didn't have any big trouble with it. I saw vehicles coming the other way, but the police were there to close the road. It happens sometimes in Belgium."

The race is in the final year of its current contract between the Muscat Municipality, Tour de France organiser ASO and Eddy Merckx's Paumer company.

It experienced safety problems in 2015, too, when the penultimate stage was cancelled because of the 45°C temperature. The heat caused several tyres to burst, and separate from rims, during a neutralised descent.

Despite repeated requests, organisers were unavailable for comment.

MY VIEW...

Nick Bull

Cycling Weekly news writer

Vincenzo Nibali may deny it, but it seemed like he struggled to cope in 2015 with the pressure that came with being the defending Tour de France champion. Yet he raced in Oman with confidence, purpose and — most importantly — encouraging form. If he keeps this up until May, it's hard to see him losing the Giro.





Etixx's winning secrets revealed

New riders *and* plenty of early season wins: *CW* finds out how

Gregor Brown in Muscat

Etixx-Quick Step toasted Bob Jungels's Tour of Oman stage win last Tuesday, with the Luxembourgish rider's win part of the biggest, most diverse and well-planned cluster of victories in 2016. Not only had the Belgian team hauled in 11

wins, five of them going to the back-on-song Marcel Kittel, but it has done so with six different riders. Here are the secrets to the team's early-season success.

Good transfers

General manager Patrick Lefevere's expert eye easily spots new talent, or picks it up at the opportune moment.

For example, signing Marcel Kittel from team Giant after an annus horribilis. Team BMC's Greg Van Avermaet explained, "He signs riders at a certain point when they are not yet that good or going a little bit down."

Training camps

Every team has them, but Etixx's seem more intense. "I've never done as many hours as I did this winter," said Dan Martin, who took an explosive uphill victory in the Volta a la Comunitat Valenciana (right). "It's been a big step up; not harder, but different. We were away on three training camps, we never did that with Cannondale-Garmin."

Good vibes

"The new riders say that our atmosphere is different, they have more support and confidence," sports

director Rik Van Slycke said. "That means that they were missing something before. If you don't have to fight for position on your own, that makes a difference. And you want to pay your teammates back with a win."

Research

Etixx studied the details for Jungels, one of three new riders (including Kittel and Martin) who have won in 2016. The team previewed the final kilometres in Oman multiple times and helped Jungels decide on a 55-tooth chain ring. It was the masterstroke as he sped clear downhill at 100kph and held off the chase on the subsequent uphill finish.

Eagerness

"Maybe it was that desire to prove oneself," added Martin, reflecting on his win in Valencia. "But it's also that new environment that spurs you on."

Etixx's 2016 wins to date

- 18 Jan** – Tour de San Luis, stage one (team time trial)
- 19 Jan** – Tour de San Luis, stage two (Fernando Gaviria)
- 29 Jan** – Trofeo Pollença-Port d'Andratx (Gianluca Brambilla)
- 3 Feb** – Dubai Tour, stage one (Marcel Kittel)
- 4 Feb** – Volta a la Comunitat Valenciana, stage two (Dan Martin)
- 6 Feb** – Dubai Tour, stage four (Marcel Kittel)
- 6 Feb** – Dubai Tour, overall (Marcel Kittel)
- 7 Feb** – Volta a la Comunitat Valenciana, stage five (Stijn Vandenbergh)
- 16 Feb** – Tour of Oman, stage one (Bob Jungels)
- 17 Feb** – Tour of the Algarve, stage one (Marcel Kittel)
- 20 Feb** – Tour of the Algarve, stage four (Marcel Kittel)





Rowsell and McNally
at the CiCLE Classic

Madison focused on rider development

Career progression and realising potential just as important as race results in team philosophy

Nick Bull

Having helped two riders move up to Pro Continental level for 2016, development will continue to be at the forefront of Madison-Genesis's ambitions this season.

Mark McNally and Australian Tom Scully joined Wanty-Groupe Gobert and Drapac respectively this winter after successful spells at the British team, and with the team now working alongside Mark Cavendish on his CVNDSH Scholarship programme with Dimension Data, it is hoped that more Madison riders can follow them.

"Take the Tour Series, for example: it is something all the British UCI Continental teams want to win, and believe they can, so that's easier said than done," said the team's new co-manager Dave Povall.

"So there's more to our ambitions than race results; this team moved Mark and Tom up to Pro Conti teams for this season, and given the new link with Mark Cavendish and Dimension Data, that's a big incentive for the guys.

"Erick Rowsell has raced at that level

before and is more than capable of doing so again. Other riders on the team also have the potential to do so. Even if we don't move anybody up next year but help riders become more intelligent, stronger racers, that's an achievement."

Povall, who led UK Youth to the Tour Series title in 2013, will take over the day-to-day running of the team, with Roger Hammond splitting his time between Madison and a DS role at Dimension Data.

"Roger and Kellie [Parsons, Madison marketing director] have made Madison a credible team since 2013. It's exciting to get the chance to continue that progression," Welshman Povall added.

"I went to see them in Milton Keynes, and I think everything was sorted over one mug of coffee."

The team are in Majorca this week for their final winter training camp, with the Tour of Normandy (March 21-27) scheduled to be their first big race of 2016.

CW believes a rival British team have queried the legality of Hammond's role at two teams with the UCI. At the time of press, the UCI had not commented.

Brits Abroad

Mike Cuming, 25

State of Matter-MAAP Racing, Bendigo, Australia

Where are you? In Bendigo, about two hours outside Melbourne. Cycling's a popular pastime in the town and there are many bunch rides that can get quite heated. The roads are fairly flat and straight but Mount Alexander climbs to 750m, and that's an hour's ride away.

What's the racing like? I've raced a lot of high-profile races: the Bay Crits, New Zealand Cycle Classic [Cuming won stage five], Cadel Evans Road Race and Herald Sun Tour. From what I gather the National Road Series (NRS) seem to be over four to five days instead of long one-day races.

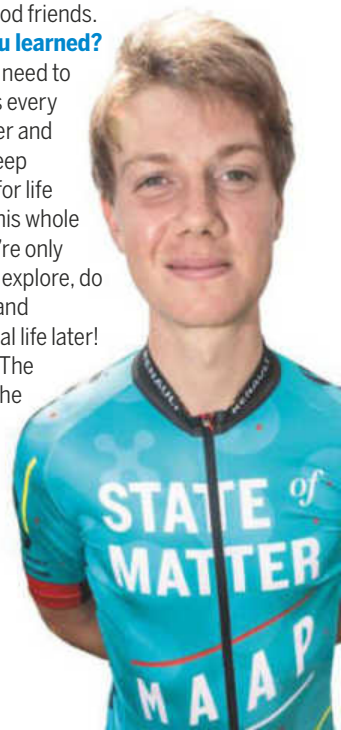
How's the form? I broke my collarbone after being hit by a car in November and I thought it would be tough to start racing so soon after, but a bit of turbo-training and a few weeks of bunch riding and I was OK at the Bay Crits — which are the most savage way to start a season — and then to get a win in New Zealand was great.

How's life? I've just moved into a new place with my girlfriend and I have a job labouring on a building site for a few days a week to keep me busy. The lifestyle is a big part in me moving here — sun, BBQs and making good friends.

What have you learned?

That you don't need to train five hours every day, just shorter and smarter and keep morale up. As for life experiences, this whole trip is one: you're only young once so explore, do what you love and worry about real life later!

What's next? The NRS starts at the end of April. Hopefully we'll get the chance to do a few races in Asia during the year, too.



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Pendleton's horse racing career under scrutiny

Questions have been raised over Victoria Pendleton's ability as a jockey. The double Olympic gold medal-winning sprinter, who retired from cycling after London 2012, was described as "an accident waiting to happen" after falling heavily during a race last week.

Pendleton, 35, (below, in red) made her

competitive horse racing debut last July, just four months after announcing she was taking up the sport. However, in her first event involving jumps at Fakenham Racecourse (which hosted a Tour of Britain stage start in 2015) on Friday, she was knocked out of the saddle and fell.

Pendleton escaped serious injury and was able to walk away relatively unscathed.

Channel Four analyst John Francome said "she wants saving from herself", adding: "I've never met her, she seems a lovely girl but she can't ride and she's an accident waiting to happen."



Quarterman reigns in Spain

British teenager thrashes the locals

Few cyclists can boast such an impressive haul of trophies from one race as British teenager Charlie Quarterman did last weekend, when he swept the board at the Junior Circuito de Gadiana in Spain.

Riding for Zappi's Youth Team, the 17-year-old got the better of locals from teams including Alberto Contador and Alejandro Valverde's development squads in the opening round of the country's national junior series, escaping on the final climb to solo to the victory.

As well as claiming the traditional

winner's prize and bouquet on the podium, Quarterman added the king of the mountains, sprint and most combative rider prizes.

"I didn't know if it was a dream or not, it was nothing like I expected," the Oxfordshire-based rider told *Cycling Weekly*. "I arrived with a couple [of the trophies] to take on the flight home, and had a couple of raised eyebrows at the airport."

While his dad drove back to the UK with the other prizes, Quarterman was



back in school on Monday morning. Describing it as "a bit of a reality check", he is now preparing for his next race at this weekend's Junior Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne, as part of a squad managed by experienced junior cycling mentor John Barclay.

Guest column

Alex Dowsett

“I’ll give it everything I can to make sure I get to that point where I’m in consideration for selection”

I want to ride the time trial at this summer’s Rio Olympics for Great Britain but, as I’ve said recently in public, I know that I’m up against it for selection. Unfortunately we only have one slot because Steve Cummings and I failed to finish in the top 10 at the World Championships in Richmond, Virginia last year.

The (Rio) course is hilly and everyone I’ve spoken to and the things I’ve seen of it suggest it’s too difficult for me to perform on given what I’ve been capable of in the past. So, in that aspect, it leans more towards Chris Froome, possibly Geraint Thomas or even Steve.

Despite that, I will give it the best crack I can. The numbers I’ve produced in training are close to the best I’ve ever seen, and I’ve had a very good winter. The Giro is my first big target of 2016 — I’d be happy to help the team out while also targeting the prologue and the long time trial on stage nine. If I can win one, or both, hopefully that will give the GB selection committee some headaches.

The ninth stage is not too dissimilar to the Giro stage I won in 2013. I’ll be going out to recce the course ahead of the race, which is something I didn’t do in 2013. I have a better chance in that than in the 9.8-kilometre prologue around Apeldoorn, in the Netherlands. The thing about long time trials is that not everyone can do them, whereas in shorter ones there’s 40 per cent of the field who can post a very good time. For example, Mark Cavendish in a 10km TT is a real threat, but in a 40km one I’d like to think I could put him away. He won’t mind me saying that!

I haven’t thought far enough ahead to visit Rio and ride the course. What I’d like to do is get to the point where the British Cycling selectors realise that I’m going well this season and know that I can be competitive against the best in time trials. I’ll give it everything I can to make sure I get to that point where I’m in consideration for selection, so, if I don’t get chosen, I’ll be content that I couldn’t have done any more.

Essex-born Alex Dowsett is a former Hour Record holder, a winner of a Giro d’Italia time trial in 2013, a petrolhead and Nando’s restaurant enthusiast.

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Giant-Alpecin withdraw from Omloop Het Nieuwsblad

Giant-Alpecin have pulled out of racing in Saturday's Omloop Het Nieuwsblad, the curtain-raiser of the Classics campaign. Citing last month's training camp accident, in which six riders including John Degenkolb were injured after being hit by a car, the team will only compete in Sunday's Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne. British squad One Pro Cycling will be among those competing in both the weekend's races.



A training accident has curtailed Giant's Classic plans

Bora-Argon 18 to ride Paris-Roubaix

Bora-Argon 18, Cofidis and Direct Energie are among the seven teams given a wildcard entry to this year's Paris-Roubaix. Wanty-Groupe Gobert, Topsport Vlaanderen, Fortuneo-Vital Concept and Delko-Marseille Provence KTM are the other UCI ProContinental teams to complete the startlist for the race (April 10).

New team for Bjarne Riis

Former Saxo Bank team owner Bjarne Riis is being linked to a new Bahrain-backed cycling team that is expected to form for 2017. Riis, who sold the Saxo squad to Oleg Tinkov before the Russian billionaire sacked him last year, is believed to be working alongside Saxo associate Lars Seier Christensen as part of a plan to return to the sport. "There will be partners involved, but we cannot necessarily disclose who at this time," Christensen recently wrote about the pair's ambitions.

Geschke snipes at Bouhanni

There was controversy at last week's Ruta del Sol, as Giant-Alpecin's Simon Geschke seemingly took aim at Cofidis's Nacer Bouhanni. After the Frenchman won stage two of the race, Geschke took to Twitter to vent his frustrations. "Not a fan of sprinters that get pushed up the last climb by team-mates and then win the stage," he wrote, in a thinly veiled post.

History repeating?

Mark Cavendish and Bradley Wiggins will represent Great Britain in the Madison at next week's Track Worlds in London. It will be the first time the pair have raced together at the championships since winning the event in 2008.

The duo (pictured at last August's Revolution meeting in Derby) famously missed out on winning gold in the discipline at the Beijing Olympics, a result that somewhat overshadowed their thrilling Worlds victory in Manchester six months earlier.

"They are back together and it will be nice to see them out there," said British Cycling's technical director Shane Sutton.

Cavendish trained at the Manchester Velodrome last week, days after he won the Tour of Qatar, alongside the rest of the GB men's endurance squad.





To do this week...

Watch Maloja Pushbikers: Six Days

A behind the scenes look at what it's like to ride a six-day, told through the eyes of the Maloja Pushbikers team. Shot at the returning London event last October, the four-minute long, black and white film details the intensity of the format's racing.

vimeo.com/152426375



Fast and furious
indoor action

Enter St Andrew's Hospice Cycle Sportive, Cumbernauld

A brand new, fully closed road sportive in Scotland on April 17 will see riders tackle the tough climbs of Crow Road and Tak ma Doon in aid of charity. Incorporating the Robert Millar Sportive, adventurer Mark Beaumont will also be riding the event's 80-mile route. All monies raised go towards supporting the Hospice and the Braveheart Fund.

£68.50 (£58.50 for 50 miles). po.st/StAndrewsSportive

Listen BeSpoke Podcast

The BBC's hour-long cycling podcast, presented by OJ Borg, returns with a special winter training edition. Away from the tips there are interviews with Team Sky, U23 cyclo-cross world champion Evie Richards and Giant-Alpecin's Chad Haga, the most seriously injured rider in the team's training camp crash in Spain. Available until March 13. po.st/BeSpokeFeb

Ride Redditch Road & Path CC Reliability Trial, Sunday, February 28

With the racing season around the corner, this reliability trial has been designed to test fitness and riders' equipment. Three routes (22, 25 and 64 miles) with the longest a loop to and from Winchcombe. "It's fairly flat on quiet roads, but for a few climbs," according to organiser John Mullen. Finishers are promised a large slice of cake. HQ: Redditch Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Club, B97 4SP. £4. Sign on at 8.30am for 9am start.

Email us about your event at cycling@timeinc.com

THE BIG QUESTION

“What is the strangest creature you have seen while out cycling?”

A cyclist that actually waved back!

Graham Parsons

A wallaby... In Cambridgeshire...

Between Oldhurst and Pidley... It was hopping along the grass verge, minding its own business.

Mike Gough

A few spring to mind. 1) Someone walking along the main road in Kings Bromley (Staffordshire) dressed in a full suit of armour early on a Saturday morning. 2) Batman and Robin at 07.00 on a Sunday morning deep in the Boondocks in central Staffordshire riding a mobility scooter. 3) A fellow roadie in Handsacre (Staffordshire) who had a blue parrot on his shoulder.

David Walker

Paced by an ostrich running alongside me one side of a hedgerow in a field while I cycled up the road. Took a while to work out what it was.

Ian Lindsay

A Lesser Spotted Audaxer. I immediately recognized him by his magnificent facial plumage and courtship attire of socks and sandals. A splendid example astride an olden frame festooned with all manner of baggage of all shapes and sizes.

Dave Rowe

Migrating red crabs in Cuba. After a while you give up trying too hard to steer around them, there were just too many. No punctures, surprisingly given the number of claws.

Rob Crane

I nearly ran over an adder at the top of blue bank near Whitby one summer. It was sunning itself in the middle of the road.

Richard Mellen

The wallaby: a little-known native of East Anglia



Golden eagle in the Highlands in 2005 on a Lands End to John o' Groats jaunt — it was bloody huge!

Chris Stead

A leprechaun riding a unicorn.

Caroline Storey

A guy in complete BMC kit (socks, shorts, jersey, gloves and helmet — the works), riding a Trek bike.

Thurstan Johnston

While descending a mountain pass in Turkey at about 30+ mph there was a large moving rock in the road, until I realised at the last minute it was a tortoise, I avoided it and placed it to safety at the side of the road.

Sam Brown

A walker stood in the middle of the Tarka Cycle Trail looking shocked that anyone would cycle on a Sustrans cycle path.

Noel Molland

A pod of dolphins, swimming and feeding just 20 feet off the beach where I was riding a fat bike. They kept the same pace and distance for several miles with me.

Mark Gillis

A dude with aerobars on his 29-inch mountain bike.

Burhan Blum

Next week's big question...

You've got four hours and a £10,000 road bike. What happens next? Reply to us at cycling@timeinc.com or at www.facebook.com/CyclingWeekly

Letters

Letter of the week
wins a Lazer 02
helmet worth £69.99



Over the moon

STAR
LETTER

I must congratulate you on the excellent coverage of the recent racing out here in Australia and New Zealand. The added thrill of seeing Chris Froome live in action has created loads of cycling TV coverage for the sports-mad Aussies and Kiwis.

When I left Blackpool and Cleveleys Road Club in the early 1950s to migrate with my parents to New Zealand, on arrival in Auckland, *Cycling Weekly* took six to eight weeks to arrive; it now takes five to six days.

So I guess I've been a reader for approximately 66 years and now at the age of 79, I still ride most days for one to two hours. My bike from 1951 was a Hobbs Blue Riband and now I have a De Rosa King 3.

I find your club ride articles inspiring and await your visit to Cleveleys RC during which I hope the club takes you over the Trough of Bowland and for a coffee at Scorton.

Your articles over the years on us older keen cyclists keep me on my bike and I hope to catch up with many of your readers at the Masters Games in New Zealand 2017.

My bike is modern but my body, including both hip replacements, two knee reconstructions and a rebuilt left foot, is only kept in working order by cycling. So thank you again, *CW*, for keeping me inspired.

Bryan Hall, Brisbane

Rose-tinted specs

Just look at the bike shown in the End-to-End article about

John Woodburn (*CW*, Jan 28). A proper diamond frame with level top tube; a classy steel chainset, instead of today's clunkers; slim front forks with a rake to absorb bumps, instead of today's 'table legs'; and a sensible stem, instead of today's 'goolie-shredders'. Bring back elegance. Manufacturers, please take note.

Mike Parkin (ex-Comet CC), Worthing

A welcome cheat

Now that mechanical doping is no longer a myth it seems like a huge opportunity is going wasted. I don't mean for professional riders, but for the vast majority of normal cyclists. The industry seems obsessed with convincing us we need more stopping power. I've never once heard a rider complain of this. What we all decry is lack of power. I'm of an age where a few free watts to help on some inclines would be greatly appreciated. Rather than a hideous-looking e-bike, a sleek racing machine with a hidden surprise would be great for the non-racing community.

John Prescott, Eastbourne

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In memory of Les

A recent copy of *Cycling Weekly* (Feb 4) told of the passing away of Les Willmott. His greatest feat, I think, was winning the Isle of Man International Road Race in the 1950s, followed sometime afterwards by a victory in the Viking Trophy race, again on the Isle of Man course. RIP

Ron Ogden, Birmingham

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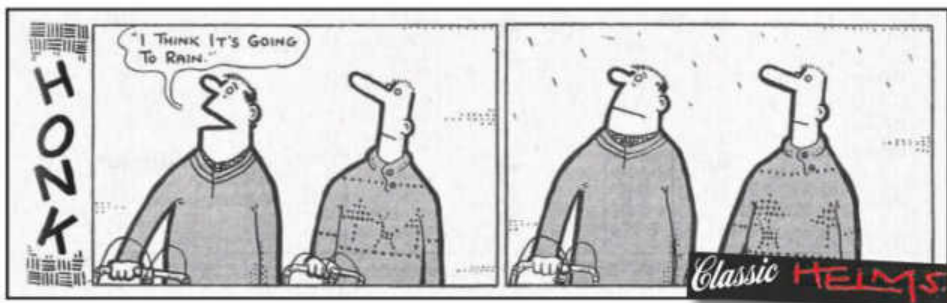
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Johnny Helms was *Cycling Weekly's* resident cartoonist from February 1946 until November 2009.

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Any given Sunday

***Cycling Weekly* hails the start of the time trial season by hanging out at the HQ of the Ely and District CC Hardriders 25**

Hugh Gladstone

Taking place in early to mid-February, the Ely and District CC Hardriders' 25 is the traditional opener of the time trialling season in East Anglia. The Fenland location may be relatively flat (the old Isle of Ely itself does make for a few undulations), but the winter wind and

cracked, exposed lanes more than justify the event's moniker.

As most participants' first competitive outing of the year, the event at Little Downham marks something of a re-familiarisation process. They'll catch up with old friends, reacquaint with their aero kit and get back into the swing of that well-versed ritual of signing on, hearing the timekeeper's countdown and

standing around the results board with a cup of tea and a slice of Victoria sponge.

It was such nuances of time trialling that *CW* photographer Andy Jones went in search of at this year's event on February 14. The weather and attire will no doubt evolve with the season, but week-in week-out from now to October, scenes like these will be repeated in village halls, car parks and lay-bys all over the country.



Left: Dressed for the cold, club stalwart Brian Cooper handles timekeeping duties at the start. The octogenarian helped found the Ely & DCC 45 years ago — as did Roy Benstead who also officiates at club events.
Above: Riders analyse their times over a well-earned cuppa.

Below & below left: Dressing for the early-season event is a compromise between aerodynamics and warmth. Twice in its 28-year history, winter weather has forced the postponement or cancellation of the event — most recently in 2013.



Photos: Andy Jones



Above: One of the promoting club's riders gets pushed off from the start. Alongside the club members competing, there were 25 volunteers helping out with officiating, marshalling and catering at the Hardriders.

Right: How many race numbers get exchanged for a cup of tea during the time trial season? How many slices of cake get consumed? Quite a few if Ely & DCC's tasty looking spread is anything to go by.

Middle bottom: A rider uses a smart phone to capture a quick record of the results board.

Far right bottom: At least signing on is still done with old fashioned pen and ink.





Main: As competitors look on eagerly, organiser Steve Laurie pens up times on the results board. After 23 years of running the event, Laurie plans to hand next season's Hardriders over to club chairman Martin Holland. "It's all becoming a bit too much to do," he says. "Demands have changed. People expect things to be done so much quicker. But I'll still help out. Next year you'll probably find me out in the cold, marshalling on a corner somewhere."



Inside Miche

Henry Robertshaw travels to northern Italy to discover a company that prides itself on quality engineering above all else

We're at the Miche factory in Veneto, the region in north-eastern Italy that has been at the heart of bicycle manufacturing for the last century. Within rideable distance from here in Conegliano you've got the headquarters of Campagnolo, Selle Royal, Sidi, Pinarello, and Northwave to name just a few.

Among such esteemed competition, Miche is a relatively small name, but with a history that is the equal of any. They've been producing components here for almost 100 years, since Ferdinando Michelin set up the company in 1919; incredibly his son, Italo, is still president at the grand old age of 94.

Most of the day-to-day business is now in the hands of Italo's nephew, Luigi, but the one thing that at the heart of the Miche philosophy hasn't changed: engineering.

Know your product

"A lot of our competitors are more like international marketing companies that also make bike parts", says Manuel Calesso, Miche's own head of marketing, with just the slightest hint of envy at the budget that some of his counterparts have to play with. "We're a real engineering company. I like to think that our products are *our* products, so we always know exactly what we're selling."

And there are certainly a lot of products to choose from. In fact Miche makes pretty much every cycling part you can think of, with the exception of derailleurs and shifters.

That means that Miche doesn't produce complete groupsets,

but instead creates cassettes, chainrings and all the other bits and bobs to work seamlessly with either Shimano or Campagnolo shifting.

The question is: why would you want to tamper with the excellent complete offerings from Shimano and Campagnolo? Calesso has the answer.

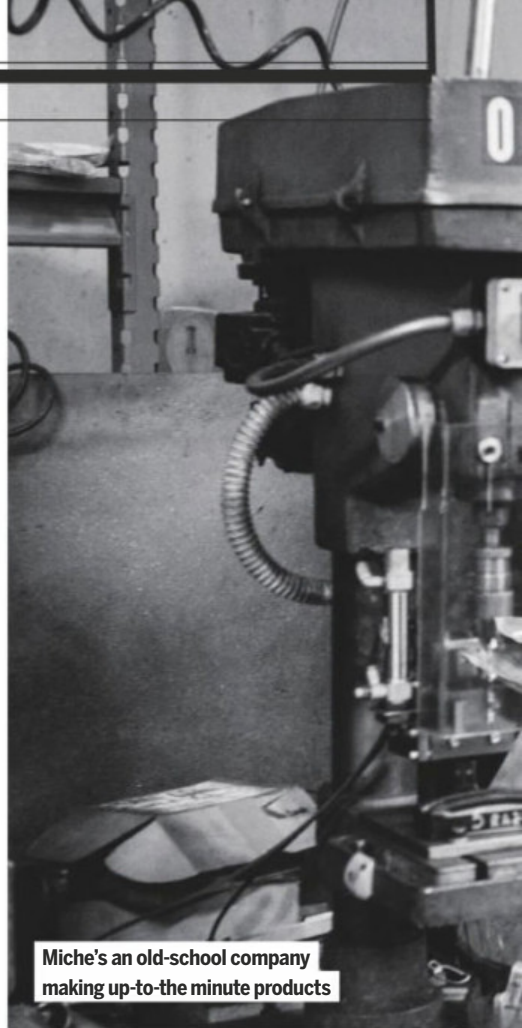
The combination of Italian manufacturing and what some would call overly-honest pricing means top quality products at a reasonable price.



Proud to wear the regulation overalls



All Miche wheels are UCI-compliant



Miche's an old-school company making up-to-the minute products



Cutting-edge four-arm spiders await their rings



A disc wheel: Miche quality control in action



“Manufacturing the parts ourselves means the price the consumer pays is just the ‘factory gate price’ plus margins, whereas other companies have to add in the costs of going to the Far East, buying from a factory, and then shipping the product back to Europe,” says Calesso.

“Plus we’re very honest with our pricing. Take a hub body that has aluminium parts in it. An advertising company would say ‘take that and put a huge margin on it’, whereas in an engineering company everything follows a mathematical formula.”

Polite pricing policy

Such thinking is seen in items such as the top-of-the-range Supertype cassette, a product that is nearly 30g lighter than a Campagnolo Super Record Cassette, but is also at least £100 cheaper.

And you can have confidence in

“You can be sure of quality engineering without the hype”

the quality of the products too, with Miche having its own testing facilities in a cramped basement underneath the factory floor.

In this room the company has its own UCI-standard wheel testing jig to make sure that all its wheels, even entry-level ones which won’t be used in UCI races, comply with the governing body’s standards.

Such lengthy testing and development, combined with the company’s self-imposed high standards, is perhaps why Miche isn’t always the first name that comes to mind when you think of an Italian cycling manufacturer. Take the

company’s current project, for example.

“We’ve been trying to develop a lightweight aluminium wheelset for four years”, says Calesso, “but until it meets the Miche standard we won’t put it into production.”

Such thinking might not be conducive to rapid growth and commercial success, but there’s no sign of the company changing its philosophy any time soon, and until it does, you can be sure of top-quality engineering but without the hype and cost of other more well known brands.

It’s great to see a component company doing what it was set up to do: make components. Engineering, and not marketing, is at the heart of the Miche philosophy, so you can be sure that anything that has come out of the doors of the company’s inconspicuous concrete factory is made to be as good as it can possibly be. ■

Chasing rainbows

Eighteen-year-old Evie Richards explains how her under-23 world title winning performance was based on bravado rather than planning

Chris Marshall-Bell

Mark Cavendish's 2011 World Championship victory was the completion of the now infamous Project Rainbow, and Lizzie Armitstead's Worlds win last September was the fulfilment of a career-long goal.

But when Evie Richards became Britain's latest cycling world champion with victory at the inaugural U23 Cyclo-Cross World Championships in Zolder, Belgium, on January 30, it was the consequence of youthful bravado rather than an intricate plan to satisfy a long-term ambition.

There was no plan to attack on corner X, or to make a bold move on lap Y; her race tactic was just to get away from everyone else, and that meant moving up from the third row — a position dictated to her because of her world ranking of 81. And that's exactly what she did.

"I don't like being close to other riders as I get nervous under pressure, so I like riding away," the 18-year-old tells *Cycling Weekly*.

"Because I've never been very good at descending, in a group I always get nervous with people following my wheels on a descent so I feel under pressure.

"On my own, with my strengths, I can really push hard and then on my weaknesses I can take my time. Although I might go slower, it means I won't crash."



Richards's forte is mountain biking, where she won silver in the junior women's cross-country Mountain Bike World Championships last September, to go with her four medals at the UCI XCO Junior Series.

But outside of Britain, where she won the U23 Cyclo-Cross National Championships in early January and has been victorious in three rounds of the National Trophy, she was a relative unknown in cyclo-cross circles. Indeed, the World Championships was her first international event in the discipline and she needed persuading just to recce the course on race day.

"I wasn't going to ride in the morning but in the end I went with the girls and [national cyclo-cross champion] Liam [Killeen] advised me to do lap and a half. Whatever Liam says is correct!," she laughs, Killeen having helped his fellow Malvern resident ever since her entrance to the sport from hockey three years ago.

Her inexperience in the event, and not knowing her competitors, played into her hands as she exceeded her pre-race aim of a top-five finish to win by 35 seconds from the Czech Republic's Nikola Nosková.

"I had no idea about the competition. I never pay much attention to who has entered — that gets me in a worse mindset," Richards says. "So I go in with an open mind."

Richards only began cycling three years ago when her father bought a bike in the Cycle to Work scheme, and she joined him to improve her hockey fitness. Before long, she had permanently swapped hockey sticks for the Malvern Hills trails, which she rode her mountain bike on relentlessly, day and night.

So unschooled is she in international cross that she says she "didn't realise how fast the start would be. There wasn't a gun, either, so I was quite shocked

when the green light just flashed."

Despite that, and her starting berth, her excellent bike-handling skills meant that she took up position at the head of the race after just one lap.

"When I got to the front I was like, 'Oh, gosh, this is going to be it,'" she remembers. "That was quite early on and it could have gone wrong.

"New world champ!"

"On the last lap all the Belgians started shouting, 'New world champ!' and I was thinking that a 30-second lead isn't that long. I could have punctured and the descents were getting really slippery.

"It was four or five metres before the line when I thought, 'I've got it.'"

A few months before race day Richards was worried about her long-term prospects after Ian Yates, BC's performance pathway manager, told her that her future on the Academy programme depended on her winning a medal at a World Championships. Amazingly, she says she was actually supremely relaxed before the race. And when the nerves did creep in, she opted for a singalong.

"I went into the car for 90 minutes and listened to songs I could sing to. There were a few One Direction ones playing!" she says.

Her rainbow jersey is to be paraded at a family party in the coming weeks, before Richards, a member of the British Cycling Senior Academy mountain bike squad, gets back on two wheels.

She will make her road debut for 100% ME this season, as well as continuing her mountain biking and cross campaigns.

Her transformation as a talented mountain biker to Britain's newest world champion and Tokyo 2020 medal prospect means her worries should be well behind her.

"To have got a mountain bike silver and now a World Championship gold... well, I can't believe it really."



“I never pay attention to who has entered the competition — that gets me in a worse mindset”

A photograph of a cyclist riding a wooden bridge in a forest. The cyclist is wearing a red helmet and a black and white jersey. The bridge is made of wooden planks and has wooden railings on both sides. The background is a lush green forest with many trees.

3 April • Moors & Shores North Yorkshire

15 May • Grizedale Grizzly South Lakes, Cumbria

10 July • Peak District Pioneer Bakewell, Derbyshire

18 Sept • Galloway Gallop Dumfries, Scotland

16 Oct • Lakeland Monster Miles North Lakes, Cumbria

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Is graphene cycling's next game changer?

Chris Hovenden considers whether cycling is about to be revolutionised by a super-thin transparent form of carbon

Graphene is derived from graphite, commonly found in pencils. It is a single sheet of carbon that is only one atom thick and some predict that it will have more of an impact on cycling than carbon-fibre.

Stronger and lighter

In 2004, two scientists at the University of Manchester managed to isolate graphene from graphite and their discovery subsequently won the 2010 Nobel Prize for Physics. The material is said to have some exceptional attributes: much stronger and six times more flexible than steel; conducts electricity as efficiently as copper; dissipates heat better than any other known material; and is impermeable, even though it is almost transparent.

The potential applications for the next generation of cycling products are obvious, from lighter bike frames and wheels, to safer carbon rim brake

systems, enhanced electronic shifting and even 'smart clothing'.

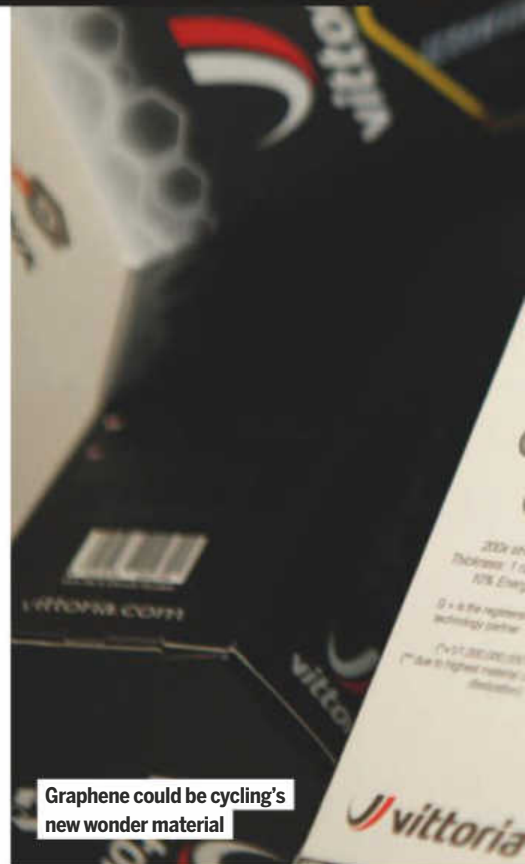
However, not all scientists agree with the bold claims of this touted revolutionary material. Sir Harry Bhadeshia, Tata Steel Professor of Metallurgy at the University of Cambridge, says that on a small scale, graphene is substantially stronger than steel, but as much as claimed:

"Graphene is a two-dimensional material. A perfect sample with a size about 1 millionth of a metre square is about six times stronger than steel of similar dimensions," he said.

Professor Bhadeshia also confirmed that the main problem with the suggested benefits of graphene is that when you upscale to a tangible size, there will be imperfections in the material, and imperfections will cause weaknesses.

Application to cycling

To date, the cycling world has been



slow to adopt graphene, but Italian company Vittoria is a strong believer in the material's potential. It has spent five years researching its application and with its partner Directa Plus, has invested 45 million euros.

Vittoria says it has managed to combine graphene with both rubber and carbon to create new tyres and wheels. The tyres are said to have reduced rolling resistance, enhanced durability and better grip. Also, Vittoria says its wheels have 50 per cent more lateral stiffness, 10

Yes



Rudie Campagne

President of the Vittoria Group

"It is inevitable that the cycling industry will embrace the graphene revolution that

Vittoria has started. We will probably see the applications of graphene with rubber and carbon as a widespread practice in tyres, wheels and probably frames as well. Only time and costs are hindering this rapid development, because we have found no real downsides to the use of this unique material. This revolution has only just begun."

No



Sir Harry Bhadeshia

Tata Steel Professor of Metallurgy at the University of Cambridge

"Unlike steel or carbon-fibre, graphene's strength collapses as the size is increased. This is because one cannot rely on perfection. Nature detests perfection. Like carbon nanotubes, thermodynamics tells us that the mechanical properties of graphene cannot be scaled up with size. Based on what we know about graphene today, it will not replace carbon-fibre in bicycles."



per cent more heat dissipation and 18 per cent more impact strength while being 15 per cent lighter.

Rudie Campagne, president of the Vittoria group, believes they have only just touched the surface of graphene's potential. "At this point we haven't yet exploited the electric conductivity of graphene, so the cycling industry will likely benefit from this in the future. As graphene gets successfully applied to additional partner materials, either in the cycling industry or beyond, more unique properties will be unlocked."

Other cycling brands have dabbled with graphene but do not share Vittoria's confidence and, so far, have not taken it to production. Christian Wurmbäck, head of product development bicycle tyres at Continental, explains: "In the past we did some trials with graphene in the casing and tread of our tyres. However, although the directionality of the compound brought some benefits to the casing, the development of our

Carbon Black compounds [which are said to use carbon nano particles] is at a higher level, so there was no need to jump back on graphene."

OUR TAKE

Graphene is creating quite a buzz across a range of industries, but we are some way from understanding its potential in cycling. In theory, its strength, heat dissipation, conductivity and low weight provide almost endless possibilities — from lighter and stronger frames and wheels, to clothing that could be more robust as well as 'smart'. Only time will tell whether it revolutionises cycling. At present the main obstacles appear to be transferring graphene from a lab setting in its purest form into a state that it can be useful for mass production.

HOT STUFF

Rapha Core jersey and shorts

Rapha just got that little bit more affordable with these new Core jersey and shorts, which are the cheapest the British brand has ever produced. Rapha has approached the design with its usual level of care and attention — there's still a poem on the inside of the shorts!

Price: £90 (jersey),

£100 (shorts)

Contact: www.rapha.cc

Test report: April



ENVE SES 4.5 Carbon Fibre wheelset

The ENVE SES 4.5s are the wheels of choice of WorldTour team Dimension Data.

The American company says the 4.5s are designed to be a mid-depth everyday cycling wheelset. The combination of the 48mm deep front wheel and 56mm deep rear should appeal to those looking for an aerodynamic advantage without a weight and handling penalty.

Price: £3,100 Contact: www.saddleback.co.uk Test report: April



SRM PC8 power meter unit



The new SRM PowerControl 8 power meter head unit looks similar to previous model, PowerControl 7. However, inside,

the anodised aluminium housing the PC8's software has received quite an upgrade. It has 500MB of storage, which should take care of 4,000 hours of training; a built-in motion sensor; GPS tracking and ANT+ compatibility.

Price: £599.99

Contact: www.trainsharpcyclecoaching.co.uk

Test report: April

Bontrager Velocis jacket £149.99

Over the last couple of months Bontrager's Velocis jacket has become my go-to waterproof for wet rides. It's the equal of anything out there when it comes to keeping you dry, but manages to marry this with outstanding breathability meaning that I've never overheated, even on the steepest climbs. The fit is also good. It's reasonably slim to avoid windflap, but not to the point of being restrictive or preventing you from layering up underneath on cold days. That said it's not without its flaws. The thumb loops are nothing more than elastic hoops stitched in to the cuff, and I would have liked to see a more refined design on such an expensive jacket. The zip also had a tendency to get stuck in the surrounding material.

Henry Robertshaw **254g**

www.bontrager.com

8



Castelli Flanders Warm long-sleeved base layer £60

Castelli's Flanders Warm may be a synthetic baselayer, but it has the look and the silky feel of a wool one. It comes up high, so it keeps your neck warm and has a much lighter mesh fabric under the armpits to keep you a bit cooler in what tends to be a hot spot. This doesn't help much with odour build-up though, as being synthetic the Flanders Warm is still a bit susceptible to pong.

Arms and torso are long enough to fit well on the bike and stretchy so that they achieve a close fit. The Flanders Warm washes up well, is very comfortable to use and has kept me at just the right temperature throughout rides in typical UK winter conditions.

Paul Norman **140g**

www.saddleback.co.uk

9



Orange Seal tyre sealant £12.99

Orange Seal is a US brand of latex-based tyre sealant. Along with its colour its main characteristic is quite a gritty texture due to the included particles. These help to plug up any leaks effectively as they are of differing sizes, helping to form a matrix to seal the hole with the latex making it airtight. Orange Seal claims that its formula is more effective at coating the inside of the tyre than competitors' offerings and works over a wide temperature range. I've used it to mount tubeless-ready tyres, where I got a quick seal without difficulty. It has also mended a flat in a cyclo-cross tub, which is now as airtight as when it was new.

Paul Norman **237ml**

www.extrauk.co.uk

8





Velopac mini-jerseys £7

With the Grand Tours fast approaching, it's time to ditch your furry dice in favour of a mini race jersey to hang on your windscreen. Coming in a pack of four, you can go for one of three Tour de France classification leader's jerseys or a Giro maglia rosa. They are fade-resistant and each comes with a plastic hanger and a suction cup which, although a great idea, didn't really hold the jersey in place and kept finding its way on to the seat. Velopac will produce custom versions in orders from 100 up, or 25 up if they also make your club's full-sized kit, so you could fly your club's colours as you head to your next race. *Paul Norman* **15g each**

www.velopac.co

6

Morvelo Stealth Stormshield bibtights £115

Morvelo's winter tights are thermal, surface treated for water resistance and windproof, all in one package. The bibtights are made from Super Roubaix fabric and have breathable waterproof and windproof panels across the outside of the thighs. The legs are held in place by foot stirrups. The tights are cut high across the body and have a zipper to help get them on and off, so there's a good amount of overlap with your top half garments to avoid cold gaps. The technical materials mean that the legs are not all that stretchy and it takes a bit of work to get them pulled on. Once there though, they're very comfortable in UK winter conditions. *Paul Norman* **326g**

www.morvelo.com

7



LONG TERM TEST

Eight months later

Sugoi RS leg-warmers £44.99

I wasn't all that taken by these leg-warmers when I reviewed them last year, but they've grown on me. The rucking behind the knee doesn't seem such an issue now and they stay put really well thanks to the comfortable internal silicone micro-grippers and external red bands which hold the shorts in place well. *PN*

www.sugoi.com

8



Warming to the Sugois

Jobsworth Taku minipump £24.99

The Taku is a neat little pump which, at 17cm long, fits easily into a jersey pocket. It pushes directly onto Presta or Schrader valves and has a pull-out lever to ensure a firm fit without air leakage. When not in use, there's a rubber sleeve between the handle and the barrel to keep it closed.

The pump's body is Teflon lined and this can be felt in the smooth stroke. Despite its diminutive dimensions it's efficient, getting a 25mm tyre up to get-me-home pressures quickly and without any major effort, although it's harder work to get up above 70psi, taking around 200 strokes.

Ease of pumping is helped by a comfortable build, without sharp edges to dig in when in use. *Paul Norman* **97g**

www.planetx.co.uk

9



Green Oil Green Clean Bike Cleaner £7.99

I like the fact that Green Oil stands by its principles by sticking with its tried and tested environmentally friendly formula. Though now they've developed the Green Clean further by simply reducing most of the water content from its Bike Cleaner. The redesigned bottle is easier to use than previous versions and is now leak-proof too.

It also powers away dirt just as well as ever. I did further dilute the cleaner down myself but mixed it so it was slightly stronger than recommended —this was needed for dealing with ground-in winter road crud.

Hannah Bussey **1ltr**

www.green-oil.net

9



Can't live without

Birzman Maha Apogee III track pump £54.99

It's a lot of money for something you don't even take with you on a ride, but this pump is beautifully made, comfortable to use and feels as if it will last forever. The Snap-It valve works really well: it's very quick, gives a secure connection and there's no air loss when you remove it. If the Maha Apogee were a kitchen gadget it would be three times the price. *PN*

www.i-ride.co.uk



Inflation elation: the Maha Apogee

Wilier GTR Team Endurance Athena

£1,999

Tested by: Paul Norman | Miles ridden: 365 |
Size tested: L | Weight: 8.09kg/17.84lb

Wilier has been making bikes — save for a hiatus in the 1950s and 60s — since 1906. It added the Triestina to its name following the liberation of Trieste by troops riding its bikes in the First World War. For a lot of that time

it's been involved in racing, with two Giro d'Italia wins and Marco Pantani's fastest ever ascent of Alpe d'Huez among its palmares.

It's had a GTR in its range for some time, but this year is offering a number of new bikes under the name. These differ in geometry, with the GTR Race having a lower riding position, while the GTR Endurance is a bit more upright.

The GTR is also offered in two grades of carbon: the SL and the Team, the latter being a couple of hundred grams heavier. And there's a disc version plus the older GTR Classic to complete the range.

The frame

Wilier claims a weight of 1,190 grams for the GTR Endurance frame. It follows the modern trends of a wide down tube and bottom bracket, asymmetric chainstays and clearance for 28mm tyres. Its cables are internally routed and it can be converted to electronic shifting.

Wilier puts great store on the robustness of the head tube and its junction to the fork and its entire range, including the GTR, is overbuilt in this area to ensure good tracking. The fork is all carbon and has Kammtail

section legs to improve its aerodynamics.

Specification

The spec is as Italian as can be, with a full Campagnolo Athena groupset with an alloy 50/34 compact chainset and a 12-29 cassette. The Wilier also rolls on a Campagnolo Zonda wheelset, with its distinctive clustered spoking in the rear wheel and milling between the spokes to reduce weight. The alloy finishing kit comes from FSA and there's a Selle Italia saddle. And to

complete the Italian theme there are Vittoria Zaffiro Pro 25mm tyres.

For those who prefer Shimano, there is an Ultegra build of the GTR Endurance available for £1,650, while the GTR SL range goes up to £3,000 with Dura-Ace or Chorus and there are custom-build options too.

Ride

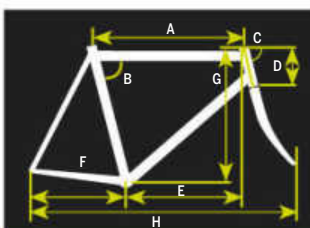
For its price the Wilier is a light bike and this is reflected in the lively ride. It accelerates well and feels like a bike



Wilier GTR Team Endurance Athena £1,999.00

Frame	■■■■■■■■■■	9/10
Specification	■■■■■■■■■	8/10
Ride	■■■■■■■■■■	9/10
Value	■■■■■■■■■■	9/10

Distributor	www.atb-sales.co.uk
Frame	GTR Team Endurance carbon
Fork	All carbon
Size range	XS-XXL
Weight	(without pedals): 8.09kg/17.84lb
Groupset	Campagnolo Athena 11sp
Alterations	None
Gear ratios	12-29t, 50/34t
Wheels	Campagnolo Zonda
Tyres	Vittoria Zaffiro Pro, 25mm
Bar	FSA Omega Compact, alloy
Stem	FSA OS168, alloy
Seatpost	FSA alloy, 27.2mm
Saddle	Selle Italia X1



SIZE TESTED: L

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
53.7cm	73°	72°	16.6cm	38.3cm	40.8cm	56.9cm	100.5cm



Lever hoods are not the most comfortable



Head tube junction is robust



Quality groupset

something of a breath of fresh air: it just feels that bit different to other bikes out there at this price. Its quality

frame is complemented by the Zonda wheels, which are lively, light and stiff, and really transfer the power to the road well.

A full Campagnolo Athena groupset is also a bonus, providing consistent and quality shifting.

Verdict

There is much competition at the £2,000 price point, with some excellent offerings from more mainstream brands. But the Wilier really does hold its own in this company. It's great fun to ride and encourages you to push yourself that bit harder, but without being a handful to pilot. And the all-Italian spec will definitely appeal to those looking for a Campagnolo-equipped ride with a bit of Italian flair.

The Zonda wheelset is enjoyable to ride and should prove good for many miles, while the Athena groupset provides the shifting performance of Campagnolo's higher-end groupsets along with 11-speed shifting. You don't get the crawl-gear options with

Campagnolo that are increasingly available with Shimano and SRAM groupsets, but I didn't find that an issue even on steeper ascents.

It's good to see a quality brand, which sells via retail stores, provide a bike that is a bit different from the mainstream. The GTR's price is competitive with other brands' offerings, it offers a quality ride and the kudos of a Campagnolo specification.

9

For

- Engaging ride
- All-Italian spec
- Quality components

Against

- Brake hoods are not the most comfortable
- Slightly sub-par tyres

which needs to be ridden with some urgency. Even in Endurance geometry it feels fast but without being twitchy; and I ticked along at a good rate on the flat.

Hitting the hills, I could feel that lack of weight again and was able to climb steep ascents with ease — indeed to such an extent that I was half way up a 15 per cent gradient before realising that there was another gear left in the box. The GTR also descends well with a confidence-inspiring ride at speed.

I did find that I could induce some slip from the Zaffiro tyres on slicker, wet climbs though. A tyre upgrade would add some more grip.

The saddle and bars are comfortable for longer rides, although I did find the Athena levers and hoods slightly narrower and less padded than Shimano's or SRAM's, making them a bit more awkward to perch on for long periods.

Value

For £2,000, the GTR Team Endurance provides

Mudguards

Chris Hovenden heads out into the rain to put five sets of mudguards to the test

What?

There are broadly three types of mudguards: classic full-length metal or chromoplastic guards that require frame mounting eyelets; clip-on plastic guards that can be fitted to the vast majority of road bikes; and mtb-style guards that clip on to the seatpost and down tube. We've tested all three types here.

Why?

Fitting mudguards to your bike will protect you and your trusty steed from road spray. The quality of your ride should improve immeasurably when your shoes aren't full of water and your lower back isn't soaked through. Also, your fellow riders will be thankful that you have fitted a rear mudguard; in fact, for some group rides it is obligatory!

How?

To fully test each set of mudguards they were ridden on multiple wet rides, including days when there was plenty of surface water, light drizzle and heavy sustained downpours. They were judged on the ease of installation, coverage and protection, weight, durability, aesthetics and any stand-out features.

HOW WE SCORE

- 10 - Superb, best in its class and we couldn't fault it
- 9 - Excellent, a slight change and it would be perfect
- 8 - Brilliant, we'd happily buy it
- 7 - Solid, but there's better out there
- 6 - Pretty good, but not quite hitting the mark
- 5 - OK, nothing wrong with it, but nothing special
- 4 - A few niggles let this down
- 3 - Disappointing
- 2 - Poor, approach with caution
- 1 - Terrible, do not buy this product

SKS Bluemels Reflective 45 Black £34.99

The Bluemels guards look properly old-school, with a front mudflap and a rear reflector. They have robust stainless stays with rubber end caps and are quite wide too at 45mm, so there's room for larger tyres. They are also on the heavy side at 460g.

Fitment was easy and there were plenty of spare bolts. The bolts at the ends of the stays where they meet the guards are a bit fiddly and you need to make sure they are well tightened so that they don't come loose and get lost. Mounting the guards on a bike with cable disc brakes was a bit tricky too — the stays needed spacers (not supplied) to stop them fouling the calipers.

Once on, the guards feel really sturdy and should give long use. They also have reflective strips down the length of the sides for extra visibility at night. All in all, they're a quality addition to a winter commuter or tourer.

Weight
460
grams

8

www.zyro.co.uk



Widget Components Mudguards Part Reflective £36.99

Widget Components may not be the first company that springs to mind when shopping for guards, but with innovative features they're not just trying to copy the competition.

Setting them up is quite straightforward. At the front the fixed clamp slides onto the caliper fixing; at the rear there's a standard hole for attachment at the chainstay bridge, and a sliding plastic hanger for securing at the brake.

Now the clever bit: once the stays are cut to length (you do need to get that bit right), a threaded sleeve attaches them to clips that can mount anywhere on the guard — particularly useful when fitting to a disc-brake bike with high-mounted eyelets on the seatstays and/or fork. Sounds faffy, but no more so than conventionally-fitting guards. In use they were quiet, and spray protection is as good as you can get from a semi-circular cross-section.

Weight
375
grams

9

www.velobrands.co.uk



ETC... Road Mudguards £26.99

I found the ETC guards narrow, though they had the ability to sit quite high in the frame, meaning you could squeeze 28c tyres if you had to. Check your frame for clearance though — it doesn't work for all.

The stays are bendy enough that I was able to get them to clear my bike's mechanical front disc calipers. I really liked the way the stays fit to the guards. The mounts float along the outer edge of the guard, so they can be positioned wherever you like. They've also got tighteners which screw up by hand, so they're easy to adjust and the design means that they can't get lost even if they do work loose.

The ETCs come with a good selection of bolts and washers, although annoyingly the fork crown bolt was too short to fit my bike's forks. Once on, the guards worked well and were rattle-free, although they lack some of the robustness, and weight, of heavier-duty guards like the SKS Bluemels.

Weight
190
grams

7

www.todayscyclist.co.uk



Crud Road Racer MK 2 £29.99

The first incarnation of these light all-plastic mudguards with their tool-free installation were released in 2009. For the MK2 version Crud has extended the rear guard for greater coverage and says the set-up is more durable.

Rather than metal hardware, they use a combination of cable ties, plastic bolts and brackets, and rubber bands to hold them in place. There's no need for mudguard eye-lets and Crud says you only need 4mm of clearance.

Fitting the Crud requires a bit of patience, but is pretty straightforward. To reduce rattling and rubbing you attach a pair of pilestrips to each guard, which help it float above the wheel and provide a self-centring effect.

The guards are very light, pretty durable, give good coverage and comfortably took 23mm tyres. However, positioning them so there was no rubbing with 25mm tyres was tricky; and be careful when lifting the bike onto the back wheel as the guard can catch the floor.

Weight
170
grams

8

www.crudproducts.com



Topeak DeFender RC1 and RC11 £39.98 (£14.99 and £24.99)

Topeak has been making cycling accessories since 1990 and with the DeFender set-up it has brought some of the technology from its mountain bike range to the road.

The front guard, the RC1, comfortably fits up to a 25mm tyre. Fitting is fairly simple, with plastic stays, Velcro straps and an adaptor that fixes it to the rear of the front brake bolt.

The adaptor won't fit all bikes though, and the guard offers very limited coverage.

Fixing to the seatpost with a strap and quick-release system the RC11 wouldn't look out of place on a mountain bike. Topeak recommends mount the RC11 as close to the tyre as possible for best coverage. It works fairly well but I had to alter the position on the fly to prevent tyre rub more than once, and I had to tighten the seatpost strap before each ride to prevent the guard from moving laterally.

Weight
176
grams

6

www.extrauk.co.uk



FITNESS

CW essential guide to...

NEW
SERIES

Caffeine

Caffeine is being monitored to see if it gives cyclists an unfair advantage when roasting the opposition

George Winter

It is now well established that caffeine offers performance benefits. Perhaps indicative of the substance's potency, it is on the World Anti-Doping Association's (WADA) 2016 Monitoring Programme, which, the agency explains, keeps an eye on "substances which are not on the Prohibited List, but which WADA wishes to monitor in order to detect patterns of misuse in sport". It did used to be banned, but for the moment at least, caffeine remains uncontrolled.

Dr Mark Glaister, reader in exercise physiology at St Mary's University, Twickenham, told *Cycling Weekly*: "Caffeine is a ubiquitous, socially acceptable drug with no apparent long-term health effects. Research into the ergogenic properties of caffeine has revealed benefits across a range of exercise

intensities and durations, with the greatest benefits being evident in sustained high-intensity aerobic activities.

"Indeed, caffeine doses of 3-6mg/kg [210-420mg for a 70kg cyclist] — equivalent to two cups of strong coffee ingested 30-60 minutes prior to exercise — have been shown to result in performance increases of up to five per cent in time trial events lasting five to 60 minutes."

Coffee's performance-enhancing effects are linked to caffeine's interaction with the neurotransmitter adenosine, the former limiting the latter's sleepiness-inducing effects on neural activity. Glaister explained: "At present, the key mechanism by which caffeine is believed to exert its effect is by blocking adenosine receptors, leading to increases in neural transmission rates, increased muscle activation, and pain suppression."

Caffeine's muscle-activating and pain-suppressing aspects were highlighted in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* by United States researchers.

Report co-author Chris Black, assistant professor of health and exercise science at the University of Oklahoma, explained: "Our recent study demonstrated that muscle pain ratings can be used by individuals to 'pace' their cycling intensity. Since caffeine reduces muscle pain, it allows people to cycle at a higher work rate for any given amount of muscle pain they're experiencing.

"So if cyclists ingested caffeine before a race or training, and then 'paced' their work rate based upon muscle pain, it would allow them to cover more distance in a given period of time and/or likely cover the same distance faster. This can be especially important during races where athletes pace their performance early in a race and then 'kick' at the end. Caffeine could allow for a faster pace early in the race."

CAFFEINE CONTENT OF DIFFERENT COFFEES COMPARED*

STARBUCKS COFFEE (mg of caffeine)

	Short (236 ml)	Tall (254 ml)	Grande (473 ml)
Brewed Coffee	160	240	320
Caffè Americano	75	150	225
Caffè Latte	75	150	150
Caffè Mocha	90	170	175

COSTA COFFEE (mg of caffeine)

Costa's caffeine revolves around the shot of espresso since all of its coffee beverages are espresso-based.

	Primo	Medio	Massimo
Espresso	92	185	277
Flat White	277		
Americano	185	277	370
Caffè Mocha	190	287	395
Caffè Latte	92	185	277

■ For comparison, 236 ml of Lipton's Green Tea contains around 16.4mg of caffeine.

■ Remember: caffeine is a drug, and should be respected. Symptoms of caffeine intoxication include restlessness, insomnia, gastrointestinal upset and cardiac arrhythmia. It is also possible to suffer from caffeine withdrawal symptoms.

*Adapted from www.caffeineinformer.com



I TRIED IT



Professor Chris Oliver, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the

Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, benefited from caffeine on a long ride across the USA in 2007.

"Caffeine increases endurance and performance, and was beneficial when I cycled 3,415 miles from Los Angeles to Boston. In my case, I believe caffeine delays fatigue, probably by reducing perception of pain and fatigue by increasing β -endorphins

in the brain centrally and creating an aura of well-being.

"Caffeine also increases the level of free fatty acids in the blood and increases fat metabolism during exercise. The ideal dose of caffeine to increase performance is difficult to assess but is probably about 15 ounces of drip-brewed coffee. I'd rather drink proper, drip-brewed coffee than caffeine-loaded sports drinks. A cup of coffee a day, at least, is good for you and is likely overall to improve cycling performance."

Things to try this week

Coconut oil

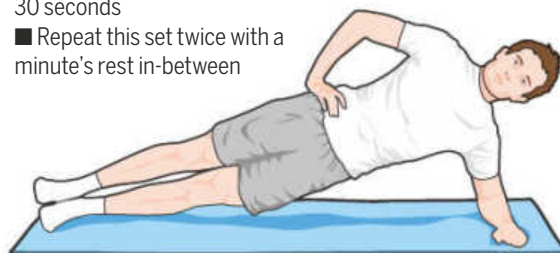
It may previously have been avoided for its high levels of saturated fat, but coconut oil is less harmful than first thought, according to new research. This has led to a rise in its popularity as more people take advantage of its nutritional benefits. Metabolised more like carbohydrates than fat, coconut oil can be used as a quick source of energy and help encourage weight loss. Another benefit is its antibacterial properties, in the form of lauric and capric acid, which may help fight off viruses.



Plank to side plank

This exercise requires advanced core strength and excellent core muscle activation, demanded by having to transfer weight while moving between positions.

- Using your forearms and toes as contact points, raise your body up off of the floor to the plank position while maintaining a strong posture and hold for 30 seconds
- From the plank position, in a slow and controlled manner, shift the weight on to one elbow and lift the other arm up into the air to create the side plank position and hold for 30 seconds
- Return to the plank position, maintaining a straight line between your neck and toes and hold for another 30 seconds before rotating on to the opposite arm for another 30 seconds
- Repeat this set twice with a minute's rest in-between



SiS Whey20 protein gel



Protein replenishment is crucial in helping muscle fibres recover after high-intensity activity. It's usually only available from protein shakes or certain natural foods, but SiS has come up with this smart idea, a whey protein gel. Each gel, available in lemon or strawberry flavour, provides 20g of whey protein, similar to the amount found in most protein shakes. The 78ml gel may look rather large, but the taste is very palatable, and provides a convenient protein boost after a ride or heavy gym session. £23.99 for a box of 12 www.scienceinsport.com

Tougher than the rest

Cycling is hard, no question, but which discipline demands most from its riders day in, day out? *CW* asked a top-level rider from each of the toughest types of bike sport

Words: David Bradford

Additional reporting: Richard Abraham, Rebecca Charlton

What is the toughest sport involving a bike? It's an irresistible question, one that's almost impossible to address without stirring up a hornet's nest of conflicting opinion. Here at *CW* we never shy away from doing just that, so we've gone ahead and taken on that most divisive of questions: which discipline demands the most gruelling daily workload, the most pain, and the greatest commitment from those determined to reach the top?

CW suffer score

First, we need to define what we mean by 'hardest'. To this end, we have calculated our ratings as a 'suffer score' based on five sub-categories: amount of training, intensity of training, scarcity of rest, frequency of racing, and injury risk. These are the components that add up to a sport's toughness and, correspondingly, the level of physical and mental fortitude required to succeed within it. From 35-hour weeks of training, to vomit-inducing interval sessions, to excruciating injuries, to all-day-long races in hideous conditions: every grim spectacle of bike-based adversity in extremis is depicted here in eye-watering detail.

And, yes, we know that 'toughness' is subjective. The aim of this feature is not to proclaim the last word on whose sport is hardest. On the contrary, we want to pay homage to every discipline featured here: each one demands enormous commitment and a particular blend of talent, skill, courage, resilience and a willingness to hurt — day in, day out, month after month, year after year. Being a professional bike racer is hard, very hard, and most of us can only dream of having the lungs, guts and heart — literal and metaphorical — to emulate the big-achievers featured below. Chapeau to them all.

Bauke Mollema

ROAD RACING, CLIMBER/GC

Bio: 29, Dutch pro with Trek Factory Racing, three-time top-10 finisher in the Tour de France

Total weekly volume: It's hard to say. If you're racing, you take a few days easy either side. I do around 25-30 hours in weeks with no racing.

Number of quality sessions per week: A minimum of four per week.

How often do you take a rest day? One per week in hard weeks.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more? Not often. I take a break after the Classics [late April early May] and then maybe before that, after Tirreno-Adriatico [mid

March], but just a couple of days.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do — and what makes it especially hard? I don't mind the very long endurance rides. For me, it's harder if you do five hours with a lot of climbing and 20-minute intervals at full gas — usually two or three intervals, but occasionally as many as four.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience? It was the Giro d'Italia, my first Grand Tour, a stage that was 260km. There was that big break with 40 guys that took 12 minutes. It was raining all day, with thunderstorms; it was so hard. We had to ride 200km at full gas to try to bring the group back. That was the hardest day on the bike.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically? Training, day in day out; so many hours. That's hard. Already in December you're training hard, as much as possible, for later on in the season. That's hard. You

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 184cm

Weight: It fluctuates between 67 and 68kg

VO2max: It changes depending on how much hard training and racing I have been doing. After the Tour, it would probably be 80ml/kg/min

Body fat percentage: Always 4-5 per cent



always have to think long-term as a climber.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? You have to have a lot of self-discipline as a cyclist, to think long-term and to train well in December. It can be hard to find the morale to leave home.

What's the worst injury you have suffered? I broke my elbow in 2008 and had to take a week or maybe 10 days off the bike.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career? It's the time away from home. I have two kids, and especially in May and June you're not at home much in those months, and then you go to the Tour for another four weeks. That's the biggest sacrifice.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline, and why? I think triathlon. They train so much, so many hours. I knew one triathlete who'd go training with us for five hours in the morning and then in the afternoon he'd do 10-15km of running. And to train so much for an entire year for so few races, that's really hard mentally.

Suffer score

Volume *****
Intensity *****
Scarcity of rest *****
Racing frequency ***
Injury risk *****
Overall **3.8 / 76%**



Gee Atherton

DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

Bio: 30, English pro downhill mountain biker, multi national and world champion

Total weekly volume: This varies greatly, from 20-30hrs a week in the gym and on the road during training camp, to back-to-back full-length days of downhill testing runs, to short, explosive sessions in the gym.

Number of quality sessions per week:

I have a mix of sessions on the road bike and turbo-trainer that work to different thresholds, and in the gym we train for power. We are always above threshold on the downhill bike too.

How often do you take a rest day?

I always take a full rest day when my body needs it.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more?

Rarely. Between World Cups, this might happen, but often I am still travelling during this period. You need to take good rest between back-to-back World Cups, as they really drain you physically and mentally. In the off-season, we do try to take a month off to completely relax and recharge.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do — and what makes it especially hard?

Gym sessions are hard and repeat intervals are hard but, honestly, so are full days on the downhill bike. We push every run and the power and heart rate are right up there, every run, all day.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience?

I've had a few too many painful crashes: clipping a rock and going down at the World Champs was very painful.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically?

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 188cm
Weight: 84kg
VO2max: n/a
Body fat: Don't know



Downhill works your whole body: arms, legs, trunk. All have to deliver power and resist forces for the full length of the run. This can be over five minutes long at max heart rate.



What's the hardest aspect mentally?

Putting it all together for the race run and delivering perfect race runs for the duration of the season at each World Cup.

What's the worst injury you have suffered?

A broken ankle at Red Bull Rampage; I misjudged a step-down jump and went way too close to falling off a rock face.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career?

That's tricky. I've been so lucky to have my family alongside me so I know a lot of guys who'd say home life, but I take mine with me.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline and why?

Time-trials. Anyone who does more than one deserves a medal.

Suffer score

Volume *****
Intensity *****
Scarcity of rest **
Racing frequency ***
Injury risk *****
Overall **3.6 / 72%**

Scott Thwaites

ROAD RACING, ONE-DAY SPECIALIST

Bio: 26, English pro with Team Bora-Argon 18, bronze medallist in the 2014 Commonwealth Games road race

Total weekly volume: 18-20hrs

Number of quality sessions per week: 2-3

How often do you take a rest day? I have two rest days a week.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more? Three or four times per year.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do — and what makes it especially hard? Probably the VO2max efforts, such as 3min hill efforts, because of the intensity. Depending what I'm focusing on, I'll do around five intervals.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience? Ghent-Wevelgem last year was definitely one of the hardest, just battling against the elements for six-and-a-half hours. It was full-on all day, very physical, what with the cobbles and wind and everything else.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically? In the Classics season, you're typically racing three times a week. It's going from one hard race, trying to recover quickly and having to do another hard race again.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? It's concentration; you can't sit around at the back of the bunch in the Classics

because you don't know where the next crosswind is coming from or where someone might attack on the next climb. You've got to always be concentrating, managing your efforts, making sure you're in the right position. It's that need to concentrate for six hours-plus.

What's the worst injury you have suffered? I haven't had too many bad ones. It's probably just bad road rash, and a couple of bad knocks to the head. I was in hospital after Ghent-Wevelgem in 2014 with a bad cut on my arm.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career? Not being able to spend time with friends and family because of having to focus on training, and being away a lot as a team. Obviously you can't go out drinking or anything like that but there'll be time for all that after my career.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline, and why? The Classics are definitely up there; they're really tough. Equally, if you're going to the Grand Tours, then three weeks on the bike is a massive effort. Overall, I guess Grand Tours are harder than the Classics, but Classics are up there in the top two or three.

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 178cm
Weight: 70kg
VO2max: n/a
Body fat: n/a

Suffer score

Volume ***
Intensity ***
Scarcity of rest ***
Racing frequency *****
Injury risk *****
Overall **3.6 / 72%**

Liam Phillips

BMX

Bio: 26, English former European and world champion



Total weekly volume: 15-18hrs

Number of quality sessions per week: 5-6

How often do you take a rest day? Twice a week.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more? Only in the off-season.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do — and what makes it especially hard? My gym sessions. BMX is all about strength/power, so I use the gym to build my engine before tweaking/tuning things on the bike.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience? Any time I'm getting ready to start racing and enter a specific race preparation block. I complete laps of the track within half the amount of time we're given at a World Cup race. It's tough but pays off on race day.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically? The fact it's demanding on the entire body. BMX requires great grip and forearm strength as well as general upper body and leg strength. With the final being the most important race, it's crucial that you're able to produce your best performance at the end of a race day.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? Producing a great start with seven other guys around you. It's like a 100m sprint in athletics but without lanes.

What's the worst injury you have suffered? I couldn't pick one. I had six consecutive seasons where I required surgery to fix hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career? I love what I do and don't feel I sacrifice anything.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline, and why? Each discipline is tough in different ways. For example, road cycling requires both mental and physical toughness, yet BMX has a large technical component coupled with the physical capacity to produce high peak power.

Suffer score

Volume **
Intensity *****
Scarcity of rest ***
Racing frequency ***
Injury risk *****
Overall **3.4 / 68%**



Ian Field

CYCLO-CROSS

Bio: 29, English four-time British cyclo-cross champion

Total weekly volume: 13 hours average during the season, and 16-17 over the summer, our off-season.

Number of quality sessions per week: Usually five.

How often do you take a rest day? Pretty much once a week.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more?

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 178cm

Weight: 64kg

VO2max: 81.4

Body fat: 5%

Three times a year.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do — and what makes it especially hard?

Ten 30-second sprints, with 4:30 recovery time between each.

It doesn't sound like much, but because you're doing each one reasonably recovered, you're doing every single sprint at max.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience?

If I race too early in the summer and I'm not yet fit enough... For example, a couple of years ago I did the Rutland and it was brutal wind and rain. I just wasn't fit enough; it was just horrible.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically?

The versatility of it; from one week to the next can be so different and thus the demands on your body, depending on the course and the conditions. You need to be an all-round athlete, not only a bike rider.

What's the hardest aspect mentally?

That you race a lot in a relatively short period of time. Sometimes you're racing twice at the weekend and mid-week in brutal conditions through the winter.

What's the worst injury you have suffered?

I dislocated my shoulder at the Roubaix World Cup. We hadn't even started the race. I hopped the barriers and clipped my back wheel; the bike kind of stopped. I landed, and my arm was stuck at a weird angle out to my side. Having it put back in, I nearly passed out.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career?

The travelling, being constantly away from home can get to you; you just want



your own bed and your own sofa. Missing out on seeing family and friends, and just being super-comfortable like you can only really be in your own home.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline, and why?

Probably ultra-endurance 24-hour racing. I can get my head around most forms of cycling and competing, but the mental side of long-distance stuff, I just can't imagine it.

Suffer score

Volume ***

Intensity *****

Scarcity of rest ***

Racing frequency ***

Injury risk *****

Overall **3.4 / 68%**



Lewis Oliva

TRACK, SPRINT

Bio: 23, Welsh sprinter, current British sprint champion

Total weekly volume: 21hr.

Number of quality sessions per week: Six

How often do you take a rest day? Once a week, every Sunday.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more? Once a year, at the end of the season.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do? Intervals in the lab: four or five sprints for 30 seconds flat-out with only a few minutes recovery. A lot of the time, the sick bucket is on standby.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience? My worst memory is riding with the team sprint at the Nationals a few years ago and never getting on the back of Jason Kenny in man two. This meant doing the whole 750m by myself. It felt like I'd have tunnel vision and hearing loss for weeks afterwards!

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically? Many will say it's developing peak power over years and years in the gym. But I find it's the lactate tolerance aspect — trying to push on the pedals while you can't feel your legs.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? Having to be willing to cause actual physical pain to yourself. It's something you have to learn to enjoy.

What's the worst injury you have suffered? I dislocated my shoulder in a crash many years ago, which still gives me issues today. Some of my worst injuries have been from lifting in the gym; I've torn various muscles, the biggest being a 9cm tear in my glute. Not nice!

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career? Not being able to see family and friends at crucial moments in the season will always be a struggle for me. Moving away from the motherland, south Wales, was a huge commitment that took a while to get used to.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline and why? In my opinion, a full day of sprinting is one of the hardest events: 12 hours, and you have to keep warm, while eating horrible snacks. Each sprint takes so much out of you that by the end of the day you feel like you've been hit by a bus. I appreciate what the endurance guys do, but that's a different sort of hurt.



PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 188cm

Weight: 100kg

VO2 max: I've never been tested. In sprint events, outright power is more relevant.

Body fat: 7%

Chris Latham

TRACK, ENDURANCE

Bio: 22, English omnium silver medallist in 2015/16 UCI Track Cycling World Cup; road rider with Team Wiggins

Total weekly volume: 25-30hr.

Number of quality sessions per week: Four.

How often do you take a rest day? One easy or rest day per week.

How often do you take a complete break of three days or more? Not often. Once or twice per year.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do?

This has to be Russian steps on the turbo. In fact, any session on the turbo is really hard, just because it's flat-out stuff — and no freewheeling, unlike on the road!

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience? It was probably the first stage of the Abu Dhabi tour last year, where it was near 50°C.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically?

In the omnium, the individual pursuit: 16 laps as hard as you can. It's just a test of brute strength and pacing. Go out too fast and you blow, but you don't want to go out too reserved, as that way you won't get all your effort out and you'll do a s**t time.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? As above, for the same reasons.

What's the worst injury you have suffered? I haven't had a bad injury, touch wood. I had a crash in the Nations Cup ZLM 2013, resulting in a deep cut on my elbow, but I was fine after a week.

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 191cm

Weight: 81kg

VO2 max: n/a

Body fat: Don't know

Suffer score

Volume****

Intensity*****

Scarcity of rest***

Racing frequency***

Injury risk****

Overall **3.8 / 76%**





What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career? It's probably not seeing friends as often as I otherwise would. But I don't mind; I know I can see them when I'm eventually free.

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline, and why? 100 per cent, it's team pursuit: 4k as fast as you can as a team.

Suffer score

Volume ****

Intensity ****

Scarcity of rest ****

Racing frequency ***

Injury risk ***

Overall **3.6 / 72%**



How do others compare?

Alistair Brownlee

TRIATHLON

Bio: 27, English, current Olympic, European and Commonwealth champion



Total weekly volume: 30-35hr.

Number of quality sessions per week: five-eight.

How often do you take a rest day?

I have one easy day each week.

How often do you take a break of three days or more? Once a year.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do? 5km running reps, or an hour's hard chain-gang followed by 10 minutes of hard running.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience? I was racing in Stockholm [World Triathlon Series, 2013] and had a 20-second gap [ahead of Javier Gomez] that I held for the full 10km.

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically? Running is more intensely hard than cycling.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? The monotony of swimming training.

What's the worst injury you have suffered? It's hard to choose between the stress fractures, torn Achilles and ankle tendons.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career?

I don't really think in terms of sacrifices; they're just choices I make.

What is the toughest two-wheeled discipline? Every discipline's different.

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 184cm

Weight: 70kg

VO2 max: n/a

Body fat: n/a

Dan Whitby

ARENACROSS

Bio: 32, English UK Freestyle MX rider with Bolddog Lings FMX

PHYSICAL STATS

Height: 173cm

Weight: 68kg

VO2 max: n/a

Body fat: 15%

Total weekly volume: 10hr

Number of quality sessions per week: Three hard sessions, mostly weight training, but with 1.5 hours of cardio in each.

How often do you take a rest day? On travel days.

How often do you take a break of three days or more? I try not to.

What is the hardest training session you routinely do? Either weight training for back strength, or bike sessions in the foam pit.

What was your most painful ever training or racing experience?

When I tore my right ACL [anterior cruciate ligament].

What is the hardest aspect of your discipline physically? In the Arenacross Tour, there is a part of the show where I ride a bike clad in LED lights and jump it in pitch black. I have to rely on upper body strength and muscle memory.

What's the hardest aspect mentally? Back-flips.

What's the worst injury you have suffered?

Compression fracture to the C3 vertebrae.

What has been the biggest sacrifice demanded by your sporting career?

I don't feel I've made any sacrifice; I love what I do!

In your view, what is the toughest two-wheeled discipline, and why?

Motocross, supercross and arenacross are physically and mentally demanding because of the dangers.



Steven Kruijswijk's Diet in a day



Lotto NL Jumbo | Age: 28 | From: Nuenen, Netherlands

Loyalty has been the theme of Kruijswijk's career, having joined the Rabobank Continental team back in 2007, remaining with them through their many iterations and progressing to the WorldTour squad. He is in his seventh year with

the Dutch team, now called LottoNL-Jumbo. The biggest win of Kruijswijk's career came at the Arctic Race of Norway in 2014, beating off home favourites Alexander Kristoff and Lars Petter Nordhaug to the top step of the podium.

It is in Grand Tours, in

particular, that Kruijswijk has come to the fore; the highlight of his 2015 season was going toe-to-toe with Mikel Landa and Alberto Contador during the stage 16 summit finish at the Giro d'Italia. This helped him achieve a seventh place overall finish, his highest

Grand Tour GC placing to date.

With a number of impressive finishes in previous editions of the Giro and Tour de France, Kruijswijk will surely be mixing it with the best this season. CW found out what fuelled the Dutch star during a recent training camp.

Breakfast

We normally have breakfast at eight o'clock; mine is some plain yoghurt, some muesli and fruit, and a few slices of bread, depending on the training. Today was a 5.5hr training ride, so I had additional carbohydrates compared to normal, with some extra bread. We bring our own espresso machine, which is pretty necessary for a cyclist, as the hotel coffee is fairly bad.

CW says:

Fuelling up for a big training day requires energy in the form of carbohydrates, and Kruijswijk consumes plenty, from muesli, fruit and bread. His specially prepared coffee may not seem vital for the body, but it can definitely perk up a cyclist, in terms of mindset, before a big ride.

1,008
kcalories
113.2g
carbohydrates
40.4g
protein
10.4g
fat



On the bike

Usually I start eating after 1.5 to two hours of riding; I have some OTE chocolate mint protein bars, some bananas and OTE energy drinks, as well as some plain water with some electrolyte tablets. Today I had three or four bars and a banana as well as stopping for some coffee on the way.

CW says:

Kruijswijk takes on board a number of protein bars during a ride, while topping up carbohydrate stores with energy drinks. In terms of immediate energy, it is carbohydrate that comes out on top, more useful than proteins and fats.

1,698
kcalories
312.2g
carbohydrates
90.2g
protein
17.2g
fat

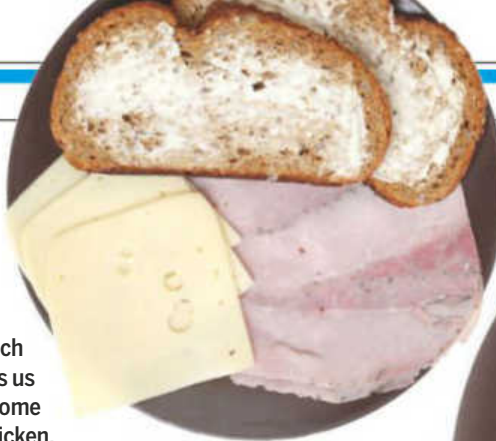


Lunch

Post-ride, I'll go and have a recovery shake straight away after training. Once I'm showered I'll go for some late lunch — it's 4.30pm by the time we get back — which was lasagne from our team chef. He brings us some food from Holland, which includes some pasta salad and homemade bread with chicken, ham and cheese. I like to mix up my nutritional choices for lunch and dinner when I'm at home. I think lunch is my biggest meal of the day; I prefer to eat more at lunch than at dinner.

CW says:

Because the ride was long, eating a bigger meal immediately afterwards is a wise move by Kruijswijk. His metabolism is still raised and his energy stores depleted after the physical activity. Lasagne can be high in fat, though it's likely head chef Jasper Boom (Lars Boom's brother) cooks a lean version for LottoNL-Jumbo.



1,047
kcalories
104g
carbohydrates
67.4g
protein
23.6g
fat

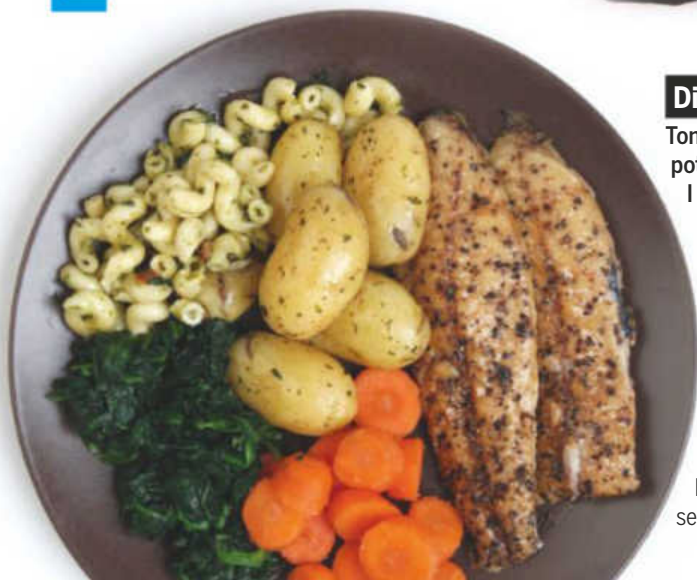


Dinner

Tonight we had some fish with a little bit of pasta, potatoes with carrots and spinach. In the winter, I have to keep my weight a little bit higher until the racing season starts, so I've got something spare. On racing days, I sometimes take a protein shake before I go to bed as well to help my recovery.

CW says:

Kruijswijk hits all the major food groups with his dinner choices; spinach in particular is rich in vitamins and antioxidants, which help fight off winter bugs. Having kept his weight higher during the off-season, he will slim down in time for the Grand Tours.



588
kcalories
48.3g
carbohydrates
51g
protein
18.7g
fat

Guilty pleasures

Dark chocolate is my guilty pleasure. I keep to the healthiest kind of chocolate. But sometimes I may have a cake at the cafe, especially when out on a long ride, but it is not a big deal to have a cake or a croissant or something.

CW says:

Dark chocolate is by no means the guiltiest of pleasures, since it has a number of health benefits and contains less sugar and more micronutrients than milk chocolate. As for mid-ride cake, that's less a guilty pleasure, more an absolute necessity!



DAILY INTAKE
4,341
kcalories
577.7g
carbohydrates
248.8g
protein
69.9g
fat

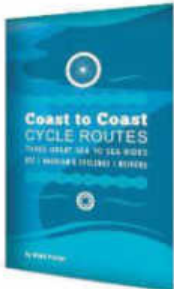
Photo: Graham Watson

Cycling Books and DVD's

Get shopping for the latest cycling books and DVD's from the Cycling Weekly Shop.

Coast to Coast Cycle Routes

by Mark Porter £11.99



Coast to Coast Cycle Routes is THE practical guide to crossing Britain. From West to East and East to West three different ways, following Britain's three most popular coast to coasts: the C2C, Hadrian's Cycleway and the Reivers. *Paperback*

Le Tour de France 2015

The Official Review £20.00



From the Grand Depart to the cobbles of Northern France and the majestic Alps and Pyrenees, 2015 provided non-stop excitement and spectacle. This official review captures in detail the gripping battles, and drama, through stunning photography and detailed reports. *Hardback*

Feed Zone Portables

by Biju Thomas & Allen Lim £17.95



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New cookbook Feed ZonePortables, Chef Biju and Dr. Lim offer 75 all-new portable food recipes for cyclists, runners, triathletes, mountainbikers, climbers, hikers, and backpackers. *Hardback*

Goggles & Dust

The Horton Collection £11.99



The Horton Collection, Images from Cycling's Glory Days & Dust collects over 100stunning photographs hey day. Spanning the 1920s and '30s, the grit and determination of the bicycle racing pioneers who established the records of Europe's most hallowed races. *Hardback*

This Island Race

by Rouleur £45.00



Rouleur set out to explore - to celebrate cycle racing in this country and to toast the people who make it happen - from the smallest of time trials to the invasion of the Grand Tours, Rouleur have captured a unique picture of a year in bike racing. *Hardback*

The Pain Free Cyclist

Foreword by Bradley Wiggins £16.99



It's not (just) about the bike. Ride your bike long enough and you're likely to get injured! This book takes you through the most common cycling injuries, what they are, why you get them and what you can do to get rid of them and get you back riding pain free. *Paperback*

Legends of the Tour

Foreword by Phil Liggett £20.00



A dynamic and insightful portrait of the world's most famous cycling race, Tour de France. A selection of international cycling writers share their views on the courses, rivalries, its crop of great riders from the young climber to legendary riders. *Hardback*

Infographic Guide to Cycling

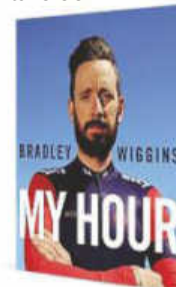
£12.99



A fun illustrated guide to the world of cycling and all things bike-related. This beautifully designed book presents cycling in a way you've never seen before. Mixing cycling facts with expert bike tech advice, this book features a unique and intriguing overview of the realm of the velocipede *Hardback*

My Hour by Bradley Wiggins

£20.00



For 60 minutes, the British public stopped what they were doing, switched on their radios, TV's and Twitter feeds to follow Bradley Wiggins and his attempt to break sport's most gruelling records: The Hour. From training to execution, Bradley shares his exciting story. *Hardback*

So You Think You're A Cyclist?

£9.99



So You Think You're a Cyclist analyzes 50 members of the bike community, examining what makes these people tick - just as keen to whip themselves into a frenzy over the latest developments in suspension forks and carbon fiber as they preach to everyone they've ever met that cycling is the solution to all the world's problems. *Hardback*

Personal Best

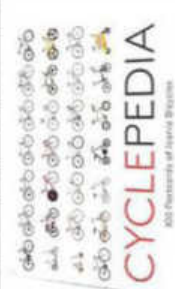
by Beryl Burton £19.95



The autobiography of Beryl Burton, Personal Best is a remarkable story of determination in the face of illness, courage in her long but lonely pre-eminence and above all, of never, ever giving less than her best. *Hardback*

Cyclepedia

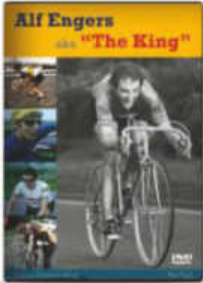
100 Postcards of Iconic Bikes £14.95



This special-edition box presents 100 postcards of the most significant, interesting and curious examples that the history of cycling has witnessed. Each postcard features essential information about the model, with key facts and technical specifications.

Alf Engers A.K.A. The King

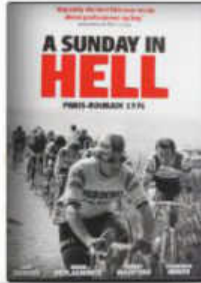
£19.99



Packed with rare film footage of the time, extended interviews with Engers today, this film gives us an unforgettable portrait of a great rider, and of a vanished era in the sport of time-trialling. For those with memories of those years, and for all those who care about the history of Cycle Sport, this film is a must.

A Sunday In Hell

£19.99



1976 Paris- Roubaix
A psychological and dramatic study of the battle between some of the greatest legends of the sport. Eddy Merckx, Roger De Vlaeminck, Freddy Maertens and Francesco Moser all participated in the 1976 Paris-Roubaix, but the star of the film is the race itself.

Battle of the Bikes/ On Yer Bike

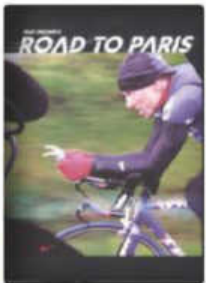
£19.99



Battle of the Bikes
examines Graeme Obree, who built his own bike out of washing machine parts and rode it in his own unique crouched position to become the World Hour Record holder. **On Yer Bike** is an intimate portrait of Obree from an amateur cyclist to World Hour Record holder.

Road To Paris

£19.99



Documentary that covers Lance Armstrong and the 2001 US Postal Service Team over the course of 27 days in April as they prepare to win a third consecutive TDF. Neverbeforeseen footage takes you inside team meetings and in the team car during cycling's greatest races, including down to- the wire Amstel Gold and the hellish Paris-Roubaix.

Racing Is My Life

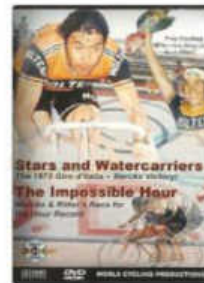
£18.99



The Beryl Burton story
Racing Is My Life... anything else before or after is just waiting', Steve McQueen from the film 'Le Mans'. A quote that sums up Beryl Burton, the Yorkshire housewife, who despite a severe illness in childhood, became a cycling phenomenon, the most successful British female cyclist ever.

Stars and Watercarriers/ The Impossible Hour

£22.49



Stars & Watercarriers:
1973 Giro d'Italia. Considered one of the best films ever made on professional cycling. **The Impossible Hour:**
Follow Eddy Merckx and Ole Ritter's race for the hour record.

Pantani the Pirate

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A must have film... With superb race footage and exclusive interviews with those who really knew him, this unique two part DVD is a very moving tribute to the memory of Il Pirata. Unique to the DVD are 45 minutes of bonus features: Full Cesenatico Interviews, Pantani Analysis, Emilia Romagna, Pantani's Jerseys.

Hell On Wheels

£19.99

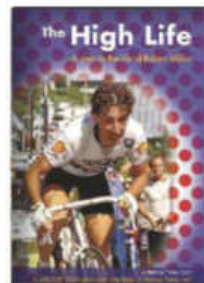


In 2003, acclaimed film director, Pepe Danquart, documented the highs and lows experienced by the Deutsche Telekom team during the Tour de France... *German with English subtitles*

BONUS FEATURES:
Behind the camera, Extra Scenes, Theatrical trailer, Image Gallery.

The High Life

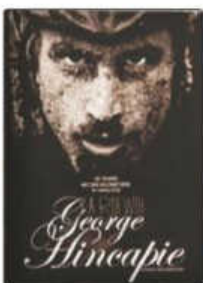
£19.99



A Year in the Life of Robert Millar. In this unique film made in 1985 with the eyes of the UK on him, the camera records his feelings about the year, his performance and morale within the team.

A Ride With George Hincapie

£19.99



Spanning his early years as a junior to the disappointment of 2009 Roubaix, this unadorned everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-the-guy portrait puts a microscope on the silent man of cycling, George Hincapie.

Chasing Legends

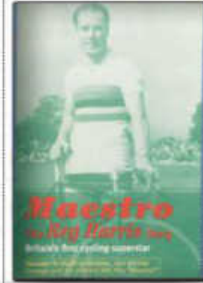
DVD £19.99 Blu-Ray £24.99



Chasing Legends touches on the rich history, passion and true grit of The Tour as seen through the eyes of Team HTC Columbia along with commentary from some of the sports most prolific heroes. With a stunning array of HD cameras, Chasing Legends will take viewers deeper into the pro peloton than ever.

Maestro: The Reg Harris Story

£19.99



The story of Britain's first cycling superstar. Five times World Sprint Champion and the winner of two silver medals in the 1948 Olympics. Enjoy the film of his amazing life, with numerous interviews and previously unreleased archive film, including the BBC film 'Maestro' seen here for the very first time. Includes: 15 minutes of Bonus Features

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The Lincoln Grand Prix sportive

98
miles

1,112
metres
ascent

Cobbles and climbs aplenty in this Great British Spring Classic

The Lincoln Grand Prix sportive stands out for one big reason: cobbles. The streets of this historic city centre are covered in them, as is the route going up the most famous climb of the lot, Michaelgate — the centrepiece of the Lincoln GP race. It's the ideal opportunity to get a taste of Classics terrain without the need for a ferry or tunnel. ▶

Where is it?

Starting and finishing in the cathedral city of Lincoln, and rolling out into the quiet, picturesque lanes of Lincolnshire, this sportive takes in some of this 'flat' county's noticeable climbs. Low traffic volumes add to the appeal and, although testing in places, this ride will appeal to many.

Why ride it?

The finish is a closed road ascent of the famous Michaelgate cobbled climb, making it feel like a proper Spring Classic somewhere on the Continent. What's more, the rest of the route is so quiet you might start to think the whole thing is on a closed road route.

History

An established part of the Lincoln Grand Prix weekend, whose showcase event takes place the following day, this sportive allows amateurs to get a taste of the pro race. Although the race is half a century old, the sportive is in its sixth year.

CW
Difficulty
rating:
6/10

This
year's
event:
May 14



How to enter

Online entries via:
www.itpevents.co.uk
at a cost of £35.

HQ details

The event HQ is the Yarborough Leisure Centre, just north of Lincoln city centre. The A46 brings participants into the city from the south. The event is easily accessible by bike and car, but expect slight delays as you reach the leisure centre. Lincoln Central train station is a 15-minute ride away, and you can even take in a test ride of Michaelgate en route.

Where to stay

For those wanting to be within a short ride of the start (two miles), there's a Premier Inn City Centre that allows bikes in bedrooms. Both the Bail House Hotel and Lincoln Hotel are close to the finish of the sportive outside Lincoln Castle.

Where to eat

Bunty's Tea Room is one of many in the city centre; its fantastic choice of homemade cakes and sandwiches make for an ideal post-ride lunch. When fuelling up the night before you can't go wrong with The Horse and Groom gastro-pub.

Local bike shop

There are two near the start: Jay Jay Cycles is just half a mile away and F & J Cycles is in the city centre.



Michaelgate is steep and narrow, and with a nice kick up on a left-hand bend just metres from the top, we had this final 300 metres in the back of our minds from the moment we started our ride.

This final challenge is what draws most people to the Lincoln Grand Prix — including us. But the rest of the route should not be overlooked. Don't believe anyone who tells you Lincolnshire is flat. OK, the total metres climbed on the long route of this sportive don't add up to a huge amount, but most of the height gain comes in short, sharp inclines.

Up in the Wolds

Once clear of the city centre, the course takes in enjoyably quiet country lanes and small villages, and gives amazing views across the wider county. ITP Events, who organises the sportive, informed us that as the professional race takes place the following day some road closures and temporary diversions will already be in place on event day. While this means the roads are quiet of traffic, the route is not closed roads so stay alert.

Heading east for a fast 25 miles, the route hits the Wolds after the village of Baumber then winds its way north.

There's a nice ramp out of Tetford village, which will really start to

engage those climbing muscles. Don't dismiss the notion of testing climbs. With an average gradient of nine per cent this incline should not be underestimated.

The lumps and bumps of the Lincolnshire Wolds kept us on our toes, pushing in and out of the saddle until we reached the most northerly point of the route, the village of Nettleton. Now about two thirds of the way in, we were heading south back towards Lincoln. With 70 miles in the legs, the few ascents that lie between you and Michaelgate shouldn't be taken lightly. So when you drop into Claxby, use these next few fast, flat miles as recovery. Get in

a nice easy gear and spin those legs out and hold something back for the impending cobbled ascent. You're now pushing away from the Wolds and skirting Market Rasen.

The final run-in to Lincoln sends you up a steep residential street before, thankfully, propelling you down Spring Hill. A 90-degree left-hander leads onto the famous cobbles of Michaelgate. Change down while still on Spring Hill and hit the pavé as hard as you can. This climb doesn't let up and nor should you. Empty the legs on this Flanders-like road until you see the turrets of Lincoln Castle — a grand finish to a rather grand ride.

ORGANISER'S TARGET TIMES

Distance	Ave speed	Time
98	12mph	8hr10min
98	15mph	6hr32min
98	18mph	5hr27min
76	12mph	6hr20min
76	15mph	5hr4min
76	18mph	4hr13min
58	12mph	4hr50min
58	15mph	3hr52min
58	18mph	3hr13min
32	12mph	2hr40min
32	15mph	2hr8min
32	18mph	1hr47min

The challenges

1 Climb from Tetford: White Gate

After leaving Tetford this is the first ramp that laughs in the face of the 'flat' Lincolnshire idea. It's just under 1km but will surprise you with gradients lingering around 11 per cent.

2 Welsdale Road

Far from an Alpine ascent, but steeper than it looks on the approach, this 1.3km kicker with an average gradient of five per cent could knock off your speed after a faster, flatter section in the route.

3 Nettleton to Normanby le Wold

Turning south to head back to Lincoln, this drag takes you to the highest point on the ride at 160 metres elevation. Get in a good rhythm and this can be conquered fairly comfortably.

NAIL IT

4 Michaelgate

Make sure you hold enough back to smash this little piece of Classics lore in the heart of Lincoln. Our advice when tackling cobbles is to give yourself room — get too close to someone who puts a foot down and it's the end of your ascent too. With an average gradient of 10 per cent and a maximum of 25, ride hard from the bottom and don't let off until the cobbles stop. One blessing is that this road will be closed on the day. It might not be more than 0.5km long, but you'll soon know if you expended too much energy in the previous 97 miles.



Event website www.itpevents.co.uk | Download the GPX file... www.ridewithgps.com/routes/11977873

Houghton Cycling Club

There are lots of jokers in the pack but, as *Chris Marshall-Bell* finds out, they take their racing seriously

Houghton Cycling Club is shortened to HCC. When deciphered, it should, in fact, read Houghton Comedy Club.

Stepping out with the County Durham outfit is no normal Sunday ride; not just a morning's enjoyment in the stunning Durham Dales and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. No, it's a ticket to the cheesiest but can't-help-but-laugh comedy show, all the while riding around — mostly up (see 'top of the world' joke) — their countryside playground.

The wannabee comedians start to audition when we are forced to stop at a temporary set of traffic lights. "I once

had a pet racing snail," Andy Hardy begins. "I wanted it to go quicker so I took its shell off: aerodynamics and all that. It only got more sluggish."

We keep going up, opening up a picture-postcard view of Derwent Reservoir and the local landscape.

Knowledge

Exasperated by the endless climbing, a voice from the back quips, "Are we at the top of the world yet?". "Nah, just base camp," comes the reply.

Shortly after the halfway mark of the ride, the group of 12 — there were another two groups of differing speeds — begin a short but steep climb. Few have ever ridden it.

The route was organised by Dave Cummins, who knows his way around the entirety of the North-East more than he does his own house.

But he once lapsed. "One of the new members last year found a road that Dave didn't know about," Paul Robson says.

"Aye, he went home immediately and drank wine to console himself," another one replies.

Who needs *Live at the Apollo* when you can have *Live on the Bike with Houghton*?

You can't repress their humour, even if the word is loosely used.

It's not just the guaranteed laughs that keep the members riding while sporting a Houghton jersey. They are equally adept — and prolific — when the cycling becomes serious.

Every rider appears to race, with the vast majority racing the local cyclo-cross leagues (TLI and CXNE) during the winter, before swapping the

Club facts

Based: Houghton

Members: 140

Formed: 1932

Meets: Sunday club runs at 9.30am from Cocken Lodge; midweek rides organised on ad hoc basis; club nights every Friday at 7.30pm at Cocken Lodge

mud for time trial courses in the summer.

The club's active pursuits should come as no surprise, when you consider their alumni (see boxout). The wisdom and experience that the older generation have is readily shared.

I am told repeatedly that the older members are forever helping out newer and even the more experienced racers with tips and advice.

Some of the riders' cyclo-cross exploits are among the best in the region, while for others, racing success is just getting around the course. Placings don't matter; they just want to race.

Houghton can also lay claim to being the first British amateur team to be

History

The club's first guise was under the name Houghton Clarion, following an amalgamation in 1932 of Houghton Wheelers and Hetton and District CC. After the Second World War, the club's membership expanded but its premises were too small to accommodate new riders.

So the members got together and built their own clubrooms using air raid shelter bricks and timber from the deck of a ship in a breaker's yard. They were sold in the 1970s and have since been demolished.

Between 1961 and 1970, the club promoted the well regarded Vaux Silver and Gold Tankard races, which morphed into the

Vaux International Grand Prix, attracting international teams, including a Soviet team that visited these shores in 1965.

The Nineties and the Noughties saw a decline in membership, dropping to as low as 40 at one point. But British Olympic and Tour de France successes saw a rapid increase in membership, with the club once again having a thriving time trialling and cyclo-cross scene.

Alongside club runs, social functions and annual trips to the Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix, the club promotes three closed-circuit races, three open time trials, a club 10 series, an open cyclo-cross race and a reliability trial.

Achievements

■ Peter Chisman was the club's most successful rider. He won the 1963 Tour of Britain and a stage in the Tour de l'Avenir. He turned professional for Carlton-BMB and rode for Great Britain in the Tour de France alongside Tom Simpson.

■ Eddie McGourley, the current club chairman, won the King of the Mountains in the 1970 Milk Race. A regular member of the GB team, he was also victorious in numerous road races and time trials.

■ The club has long had a successful trike team and in 1985, Noel Knox, Dave Turner and Tommy Thompson won the team award in the National 24-hour TT.

■ Current rider Mark Harrison recently took the club's long-standing 10-mile record to under 20 minutes.

■ Craig McCann won the 2015 para cycling national time trial and road race in CX division and is aiming to get selection for the Paralympic Games in Rio this summer.





Houghton Cycling Club

Ride highlights

1 Down Peth Bank

Featured in Simon Warren's *100 Greatest Climbs* book, the ascent is tough, the descent exhilarating, as you hurtle towards the bottom, making the most of the wide roads.

2 Approach to Muggleswick

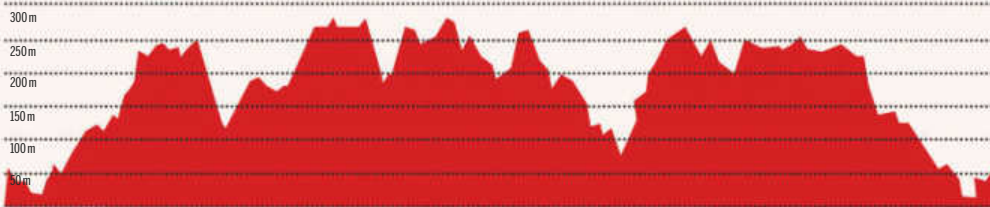
"Steep hills and bends for two miles", the sign says as you begin a rollercoaster few minutes. The descent is notable for drop-offs and turns down to the Derwent before a tough climb up the moor.

3 Ebchester Climb

It starts gentle but kicks up brutally. Even at the levelled-out summit, continuing on after the T-junction results in another mile-long drag.

Favourite cafe

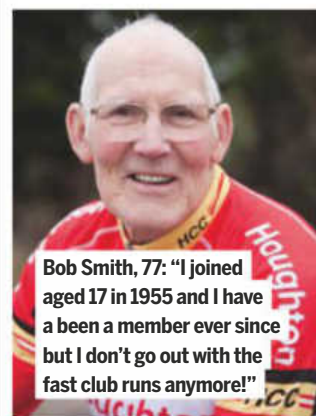
The club's predominant base, Cocken Lodge Farm, is ideal for a post-ride get-together around cake, coffee and — if you've earned it — a pint and a bacon sandwich. Part of a golf complex, local sports pictures adorn the interior walls, and the open fire adds to a homely feel. Cocken Lodge Farm, Houghton le Spring, DH4 6QP. 0191 584 1053, www.cockenlodge.co.uk



Meet the club



The chortling doesn't even abate over tea



Bob Smith, 77: "I joined aged 17 in 1955 and I have been a member ever since but I don't go out with the fast club runs anymore!"



Matt Webb, 23: "I like the hilly time trials and the 10. It's a nice club with a lot of knowledge."



A cafe menu needs careful perusal



Fringe benefits: a classy kit



Angela Humphrey, 38: "I love going out on the runs. I'm hoping to race the cross league next winter."

sponsored, when in the early 1960s Vaux Breweries backed them. They just pipped Wolverhampton Wheelers to the honour by a week.

Today, the racing remains the integral heartbeat of the club but, like all clubs up and down the country, it has had to adapt to the sport's increasing popularity. It has done this willingly and superbly; there is a drive this year to increase

the number of younger riders affiliated to the club.

Impetus

Eddie McGourley, however, has his own take on the sport's now mainstream status. "It's gone pretty much full-circle," he says. "In the Fifties and Sixties we had 70-odd riders and loads of us were kids who were racing."

The North-East is far from

being a cycling backwater, he says, but McGourley agrees there is a need to produce more top riders, something that hasn't been done since Paul Curran in the 1980s.

Add the youth impetus to the club's ingredients of knowledge, humour and racing and Houghton could well create an era of North-East born-and-bred cycling success. No joking. ■



Harry Venables, 52: "New members learn a lot from the older guys. The club needs women and juniors."

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- **20th** Wiggle No Excuses, Cambridgeshire
- **27th** Wiggle Southern Rough Ride, West Sussex **MTB**

MARCH

- **5th** Wiggle Ashdown, East Sussex
- **13th** Wiggle Chalky Chaser, Wiltshire **MTB** **NEW**

APRIL

- **2nd** Wiggle Vale Velo, Yorkshire
- **9th** Wiggle New Forest Spring, Hampshire
- **10th** Wiggle New Forest Spring, Hampshire
- **16th** Wiggle Spring Saddle, Suffolk
- **23rd** Wiggle Ups and Downs, Surrey
- **24th** Wiggle Ups and Downs, Surrey

MAY

- **1st** Wiggle Wye Valley Warrior, Wales
- **8th** Wiggle Jurassic Beast, Dorset
- **28th** Wiggle Co. Durham Dynamo **NEW**

JUNE

- **5th** Wiggle Sussex Surrey
- Scramble, West Sussex
- **12th** Wiggle French Revolution, Dover-Calais
- **18th** Wiggle The Long One, West Sussex
- **19th** Wiggle South Downs Epic, West Sussex **MTB**
- **22nd** Wiggle Working From Home, Surrey
- **25th** Wiggle Chiltern Classic, Buckinghamshire

JULY

- **2nd** Wiggle Mendips, Somerset
- **10th** Wiggle MagnifiCat, Berkshire
- **16th** Wiggle Stratford Tempest, Warwickshire
- **24th** Wiggle Mega Meon, Hampshire

- **31st** Wiggle The Only Way, Essex
- **31st** Wiggle Hell of Hexham, Northumberland

AUGUST

- **6th** Wiggle Bournemouth, Dorset
- **7th** Wiggle Haywards Heath Howler, East Sussex
- **20th** Wiggle Yorkshire Tour, North Yorkshire
- **21st** Wiggle Cotswolds, Gloucestershire

SEPTEMBER

- **4th** Wiggle Northern Angel, Newcastle upon Tyne
- **11th** Wiggle French Le Tricolore, Dover-Calais
- **17th** Wiggle Steeple Chase, Cambridgeshire
- **24th** Wiggle New Forest 100, Hampshire
- **25th** Wiggle New Forest 100, Hampshire

OCTOBER

- **1st** Wiggle Ay Up, North Yorkshire
- **2nd** Wiggle South Downs 100, West Sussex
- **9th** Wiggle Forest Ranger, Staffordshire **NEW**
- **15th** Wiggle Exmouth Ex-terminator, Devon
- **23rd** Wiggle Circuit Breaker, Northamptonshire
- **29th** Wiggle Devils Punch, Hampshire
- **30th** Wiggle Royal Flyer, Norfolk

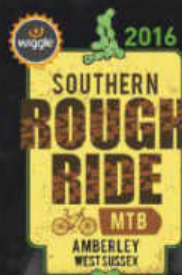
NOVEMBER

- **6th** Wiggle Hellfire Corner, Kent
- **12th** Wiggle Purbeck Hill-a-Saurus, Dorset **MTB**
- **13th** Wiggle Bitter Beast, Dorset
- **26th** Wiggle Fallen Leaves, West Sussex
- **27th** Wiggle Fontwell Freeze, West Sussex **MTB**

DECEMBER

- **4th** Wiggle Snowball Ride, Warwickshire **MTB**

EARLY **MUST-DO!** RIDES



SATURDAY 27th
FEBRUARY 2016

Epic **34 miles** | Std. **28 miles**
Based in the heart of the South Downs, this season opener explores all of the best descents in the area.



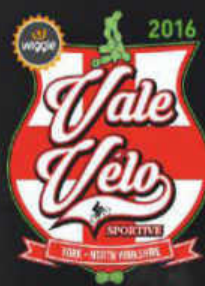
SATURDAY 5th
MARCH 2016

Epic **68 miles** | Std. **51 miles**
Take in some of Sussex's most beautiful unseen scenery on and up-and-down route that will push your legs to the limit.



SUNDAY 13th
MARCH 2016

Epic **31 miles** | Std. **21 miles**
Rich with a mixture of ancient drove tracks and winding descents and climbs.



SATURDAY 2nd
APRIL 2016

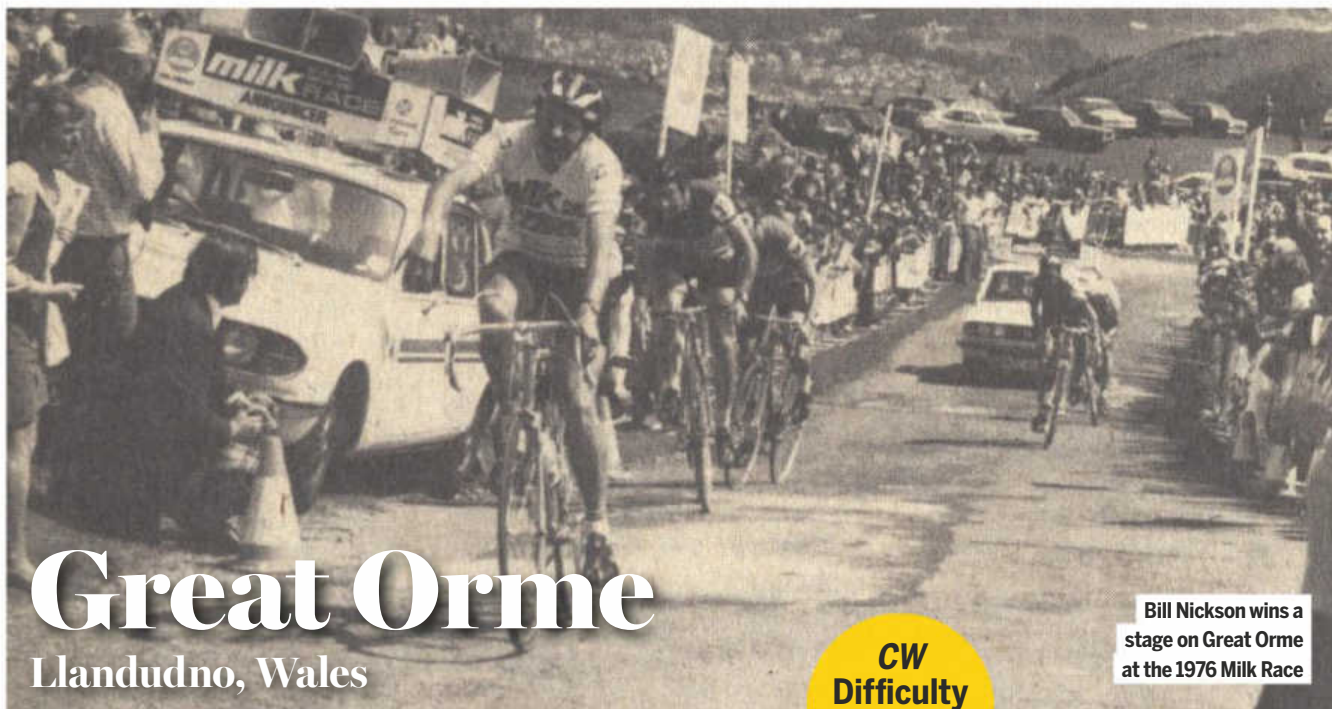
Epic **100 miles** | Std. **75 miles**
Short **51 miles**
A quick and speedy course, presenting to you some of the best views the Vale of York. A perfect early season ride to get you back to your best.



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Great Orme

Llandudno, Wales

Bill Nickson wins a stage on Great Orme at the 1976 Milk Race

CW
Difficulty rating:
3/10

Simon Warren

Here's a testing little climb in an unlikely spot, packed with character and boasting amazing views over Colwyn Bay. If you happen to find yourself in Llandudno, maybe on a family holiday, then you must ride it before heading home. There are two distinct ways to the top: first, you could

take the most direct and certainly steeper but more congested route up Old Road following the Great Orme Tramway. This will hurt the legs and you also run the risk of encountering one of the trams. Second, there is this route, which I prefer as it takes in the fabulous tightly packed zig-zags.

Leaving Marine Drive on the northern flank of the mound the road cuts inland,

ramping up between the stone walls that border the brace of hairpin bends. From here St Tudno's Road climbs, sharply bending 180° round to the left up through the high banks. As you pass the small church, following its rugged boundary wall, the slope begins to fade then relents as you ride round the country park before dropping to cross the tram lines and join Bishops Quarry Road.

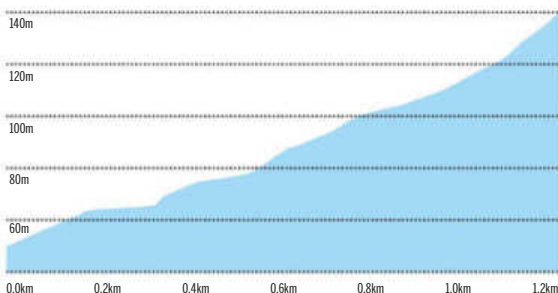
The stats

WHERE Leave Llandudno from its north-eastern corner and follow Marine Drive round the base of Great Orme until you reach the zig-zags.



KOM Top Tip Avoid weekends and bank holidays.

1.3km	139m	84m	7%	10%
Length	Summit height	Height gain	Average gradient	Max gradient



Strava file: www.strava.com/segments/7160835

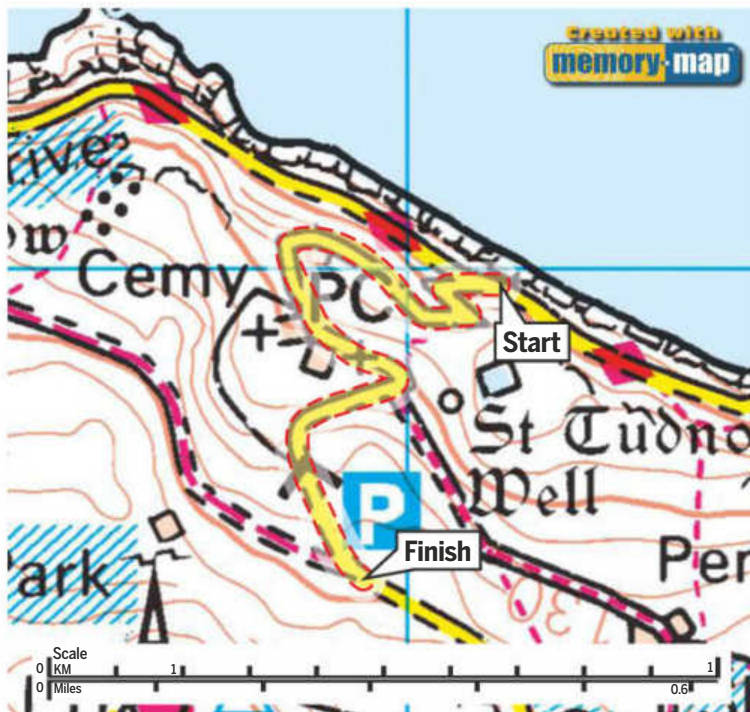


Photo: Cycling Weekly archive

Ordnance Survey mapping © Crown copyright: AM46/13. Created with Memory-Map

Thomas attacks to defend Algarve title

Tour of the Algarve | February 17-21 | Portugal

Stuart Clarke

Sometimes, the best offence is defence. At the Tour of the Algarve Geraint Thomas put on a perfect display of attacking defence — getting into a winning position and defending it to win the title.

It started before the race had even rolled out of Lagos on stage one — with Thomas coming into the event as defending champion, he admitted that there was a lot more pressure on him than there was last year when he beat Michal Kwiatkowski by 27 seconds.

Going into last year's race, Thomas and Richie Porte entered as joint leaders for Team Sky, although most eyes would have been on the Australian given his second-place finish at the Tour Down Under and his Grand Tour hopes for the season. Prior to 2015, Thomas's only stage race victories had come at Bayern-Rundfahrt in 2011 and 2014, so in Portugal he could hide a little behind his perhaps more fancied team-mate. There was no hiding place this year, though.

Faced with a field including Giro d'Italia champion Alberto Contador (Tinkoff) and Vuelta a España champion

Fabio Aru (Astana), an all-out attack — like that of team-mate Wout Poels in the victory in Valencia earlier in February — probably wouldn't have yielded the result that Thomas wanted. That's not to say Thomas didn't ride aggressively. He showed his stage racing credentials by sticking with Luis León Sánchez (Astana) all the way up the climb to end stage two and force his way into second in the overall standings. Thomas could then rely on his time trial ability on the 18km stage three, to reinforce his standing heading into the decisive queen stage on the final day as Sánchez crashed out.

Leader Tony Martin (Etixx-Quick Step), who took the yellow jersey after placing second in the time trial behind Fabian Cancellara (Trek-Segafredo), was never likely to challenge Thomas up the final climb to turn the last stage into a shootout. So when the German was distanced on the climb to Alto do Malhao, Thomas went into the defence mode that all good stage racers have, where winning the stage was not important, only ensuring he did not concede too much time to Contador.



Thomas rode a tactically canny race in Portugal

LAST WEEK

Tuesday February 16

Sprinter Bryan Coquard pulled out of the Ruta del Sol after crashing on a training ride and fracturing his shoulder blade. The 23-year-old Direct Energie rider was taken to hospital and his injuries were described as "relatively serious".

Tuesday February 16

Tom Boonen reached a settlement with prosecutors relating to tax fraud dating back to 2013.

The Etixx-Quick Step rider was ordered to pay a fine and his taxes, which relates to the time he lived in Monaco.

Wednesday February 17

Russian cyclist Olga Zabelinskaya was cleared to compete in the Rio Olympic Games after accepting an 18-month doping ban. Zabelinskaya, who took a bronze medal in both the road race and time trial at London 2012, tested positive for

banned stimulant octopamine in March 2014.

Thursday February 18

Double track world champion Annette Edmondson escaped serious injury after crashing into a car while on a training ride. The 24-year-old is expected to ride at the Track Worlds in London next week.

Friday February 19

Lotto-Soudal riders Thomas de

Gendt and Gert Dockx both required hospital treatment after a collision with a car in Calpe, Spain. Dockx suffered severe bruising, while de Gendt fractured a finger and had minor concussion.

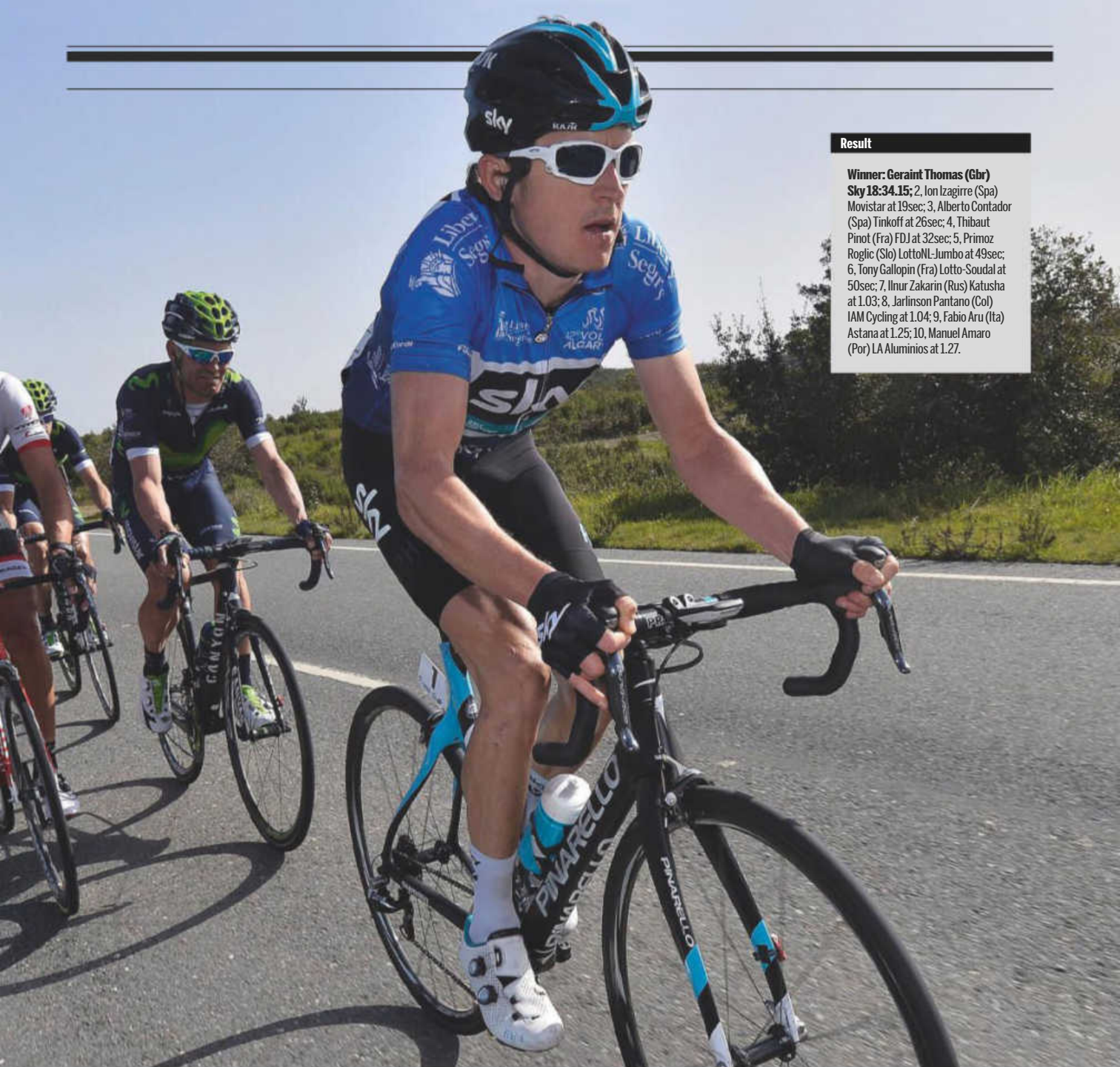
Friday February 19

Fabian Cancellara said he was "surprised" to win the 18-kilometre long time trial at Tour of the Algarve. He beat Tony Martin by five seconds, who collapsed from exhaustion at

the end of the stage, with Geraint Thomas 28-seconds further back in third.

Saturday February 21

Richie Porte said an injury was responsible for his off-the-pace performance at the Tour of Oman. He finished 49th overall, more than 15 minutes behind winner Vincenzo Nibali, citing a recurrence of piriformis syndrome, which causes cramp and leg pain.



Result

Winner: Geraint Thomas (Gbr)
Sky 18:34.15; 2, Ion Izagirre (Spa) Movistar at 19sec; 3, Alberto Contador (Spa) Tinkoff at 26sec; 4, Thibaut Pinot (Fra) FDJ at 32sec; 5, Primož Roglič (Slo) LottoNL-Jumbo at 49sec; 6, Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 50sec; 7, Ilmur Zakarin (Rus) Katusha at 1.03; 8, Jarlinson Pantano (Col) IAM Cycling at 1.04; 9, Fabio Aru (Ita) Astana at 1.25; 10, Manuel Amaro (Por) LA Aluminios at 1.27.

Skelton triumphs at Hillingdon Imperial Winter Series | February 13 | London

After seven years of trying, local rider Jo Skelton (Look Mum No Hands) finally got his hands on the overall E/1/2 prize at the Imperial Winter Series last week.

The 39-year-old missed just one round of the nine-race series at the Hillingdon Cycle Circuit in West London, finishing first in round five and third in the final round on February 13

to take the series from Peter Cole (Handslings RT) and Jerzy Kuzminski (London Bicycle Workshop).

"I think my consistency helped, and I'm too big to race for anything else so that's what I train for, the sprints," Skelton told *Cycling Weekly*.

"Normally you get one freakishly good rider who is way

out of my league, but this year there was nobody of that calibre who was going for the series."

Skelton lives near to the circuit and as a teenager began racing on the old Hayes bypass, the unfinished dual carriageway that hosted road races during the 1990s before the completion of the purpose-built cycle circuit in 1997.

"I just prefer racing in the winter — maybe it's because no-one else is fit at that time of the year!" he added. "I like racing the series, and I'd like to thank the organisers for arranging it and being there week in, week out."

Jennifer Crouch (Les Filles) won the final round to clinch the overall women's series.



Valverde wins, van Garderen strengthens his hand

Ruta del Sol | February 17-21 | Andalusia, Spain

Nigel Wynn

Tejay van Garderen was still smiling on the podium of the Ruta del Sol on Sunday, despite the BMC leader having been relieved of the overall win by Alejandro Valverde in the final kilometres of the race. Valverde started the climb-heavy day with a 22-second deficit to van Garderen (pictured) after Saturday's 21km individual time trial. The 35-year-old Spaniard of Movistar put in a perfectly timed attack before the steepest ramps of the Peñas Blancas climb, slipping past Sky duo Mikel Nieve and Wout Poels, who had been setting a ferocious pace.

As Valverde powered to the victory, Nieve and Poels faded and it was down to van Garderen to grind out a pace to minimise his losses in a gritty display that could set the scene for the American's season ahead.

Trek-Segafredo's Bauke Mollema and Tinkoff's Rafał Majka have van Garderen to thank for their results, as they sat on his wheel until the final kilometre and then nipped around him to take second and third. Mollema benefited the most, elevating himself to third place overall behind Valverde and van Garderen.

Second place on the podium barely does justice to van Garderen's efforts. He had already impressed during the race's time trial, convincingly winning the stage and putting himself into the race lead. His chase of a rampaging Valverde

on the final day was carried out with a determination clearly etched on his face.

Valverde and van Garderen's final battle was a fitting end to what had been an engaging and ever-changing race, with the lead swapping hands at the end of each of the five days. The race kicked off with a bunch sprint victory for Daniele Bennati (Tinkoff), then Nacer Bouhanni (Cofidis) won stage two and took the lead. British sprinter Ben Swift then claimed the GC lead after placing second behind Oscar Gatto on stage three, before van Garderen relieved him of it on stage four thanks to his ride against the clock.

Valverde may have won the race, but van Garderen's steely performance has no doubt scored him a mark with the BMC Grand Tour selectors as new teammate Richie Porte looked somewhat off the pace in the Tour of Oman. It's early days yet, though.

Result

Winner: Alejandro Valverde (Spa) Movistar 17:41.10; 2, Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 26sec; 3, Bauke Mollema (Ned) Trek-Segafredo at 52sec; 4, Wilco Kelderman (Ned) LottoNL-Jumbo at 56sec; 5, Rafał Majka (Pol) Tinkoff at 1.11; 6, Roman Kreuziger (Cze) Tinkoff at 1.37; 7, Wout Poels (Ned) Sky at 1.42; 8, Brent Bookwalter (USA) BMC Racing at 2.03; 9, Daniel Navarro (Spa) Cofidis at 2.14; 10, Mikel Nieve (Spa) Sky at 2.45.



Preview: Track Worlds

Track World Championships | March 2-6 | Lee Valley Velopark, London

Sophie Hurcom

Having failed to win a single gold medal in last year's Track Worlds in Paris — Great Britain's worst showing in the event in over a decade — there will be no excuses for underperformance at this year's home championships.

As well as being a chance to get a psychological advantage over their rivals ahead of the summer's Rio Olympics (now only 162 days away), the Worlds are the final opportunity for both male and female sprint squads to secure their qualification for the Games. For others, particularly the team pursuit riders and Mark Cavendish in the men's omnium, the event offers them an opportunity to impress coaches and put themselves in contention for an Olympic spot.

When to watch

Wednesday March 2: men's scratch race; women's individual pursuit; men's and women's team sprint

Thursday March 3: men's kilo TT; women's scratch race; women's keirin; men's team pursuit

Friday March 4: women's 500m TT; men's points race; men's individual pursuit; women's team pursuit; men's omnium 1-3

Saturday March 5: men's sprint; women's points race; men's omnium 4-6; women's omnium 1-3

Sunday March 6: women's sprint; men's keirin; women's omnium 4-6; men's Madison

TV coverage

The BBC has live coverage on BBC Two, online or the red button every evening for one or two hours.

GB team

Sprint: Becky James, Katy Marchant, Jess Varnish, Matt Crampton, Phil Hindes, Jason Kenny, Callum Skinner.

Endurance: Katie Archibald, Elinor Barker, Ciara Horne, Emily Nelson, Joanna Rowsell Shand, Laura Trott, Steven Burke, Mark Cavendish, Ed Clancy, Jon Dibben, Owain Doull, Chris Latham, Andy Tennant, Sir Bradley Wiggins.

RACING AHEAD

Omloop Het Nieuwsblad (Feb 27)

Etixx-Quick Step's Niki Terpstra and Tom Boonen are favourites alongside Peter Sagan (Tinkoff) for the season's first Belgian semi-Classico. There are nine Brits racing. World champion Lizzie Armitstead (Boels Dolmans) and 2015 winner Anna van der Breggen (Rabobank) headline the women's startlist.

Classic Sud Ardèche (Feb 27)

Adam and Simon Yates begin their season on Saturday in this 183km race to the west of the River Rhône near Valence, which goes over 21 climbs. Romain Bardet (Ag2r) and Thibaut Pinot (FDJ) are also competing. Most then race again across the Rhône in Sunday's **La Drome Classic**.

Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne (Feb 28)

It's the first big battle between the sprinting fraternity in Belgium on Sunday. Peter Sagan (Tinkoff), Sky's Elia Viviani, André Greipel (Lotto-Soudal), Alexander Kristoff (Katusha) and Caleb Ewan (Orica-GreenEdge) are just a selection of the standout names in the 203km race.

TV: Live on Eurosport 1, 2-4pm

Primavera Road Race (Feb 28)

Jonathan Tiernan-Locke makes a low-profile return to racing at Sunday's 53-mile race in Hatherleigh, Devon. JTL, racing with a second-cat licence, has been suspended for the past two seasons but will compete in the National B road race for his own team, Saint Piran.

Clayton Spring Classic (Feb 28)

Pedal Heaven have a strong six-man team racing in the North-West's traditional handicapped road race opener. The 50th edition of the race sees the field of 80 take on a 58-mile course. Ian Stannard, Dean Downing and Rob Hayles have all been previous victors.

North Road CC Hardriders (Feb 28)

This British time trialling classic around the Hertfordshire roads will see 100 riders trying to add their name to an illustrious list of winners that includes Chris Boardman. Cancelled last year due to snow, Ashley Cox (CC Luton), the 2014 winner, is last man off.

Nibali is king of Green Mountain

Tour of Oman | February 16-21 | Oman



Owen Rogers

Once again Jebel al Akhdar, the Green Mountain, provided the defining moment at the Tour of Oman, and last week it was Italian champion Vincenzo Nibali who won on the race's broad and barren uphill finish.

That stage four performance was the sole difference between him and Romain Bardet (Ag2r) in the six-day race, and both of them can take heart from their rides; Nibali's primary target this year is May's Giro d'Italia and with his main lieutenant at Astana, Jakob Fuglsang, finishing third, he can be optimistic for May. Bardet

clung stubbornly to the Italian until the final metres on Green Mountain and, providing he does not peak too early, his dual dreams of victory at Liège-Bastogne-Liège and a Tour podium may not be too far fetched.

Visual spectacle

Meanwhile, the creditable performance of wannabe Giro hero Tom Dumoulin (Giant-Alpecin) in fourth and the questionable form of Richie Porte (BMC) — who lost three minutes on Green Mountain and ended 49th overall — ensured the race provided a fascinating window on the season to come.

Moving from the dual carriageways to smaller

roads and spectacular countryside, while winding through isolated villages and surrounded by multicoloured rock of the desert mountains, this year's race was far from being the usual preamble to the Green Mountain.

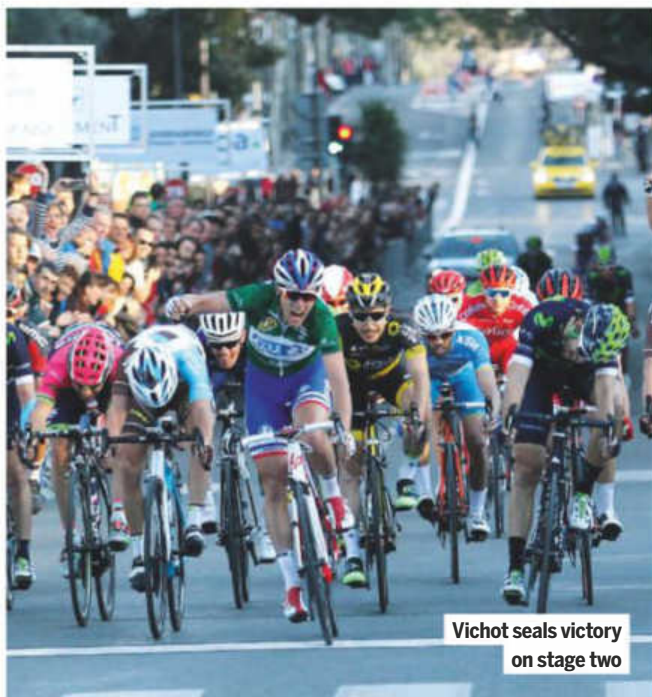
While the big GC riders tested their form for the first time, others were bagging stage victories. Alexander Kristoff won both sprint stages with relative ease, building both the Katusha train and his own form ahead of the Classics where one of his rivals is sure to be compatriot Edvald Boasson Hagen. Dimension Data's Norwegian again proved his class, winning the hilltop finish at Quriyat, and again

after the unrelentingly undulating stage five at the Ministry of Tourism.

Indeed, Dimension Data won the team classification, proving they are both strong and united, something sure to help them, though whether they can help Boasson Hagen in his quest for Classics glory remains to be seen.

Result

Winner: Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana 22:25.25; 2, Romain Bardet (Fra) Ag2r La Mondiale at 15sec; 3, Jakob Fuglsang (Den) Astana at 24sec; 4, Tom Dumoulin (Ned) Giant-Alpecin at 40sec; 5, Rui Costa (Por) Lampre-Merida at 54sec; 6, Edvald Boasson Hagen (Nor) Dimension Data at 1:06; 7, Brendan Canty (Aus) Drapac at 1:31; 8, Domenico Pozzovivo (Ita) Ag2r La Mondiale at 1:38; 9, Merhawi Kudus (Eri) Dimension Data at 1:56; 10, Gianluca Brambilla (Ita) Etixx-Quick Step at 1:59.



Vichot seals victory on stage two

Vichot wins second stage and overall in Provence

Tour du Haut Var | February 20-21 | France

Sophie Hurcom

The Provence region in south-eastern France seems to be good to FDJ's Arthur Vichot. The last time the Frenchman recorded a victory, before he won the second stage and overall at last weekend's two-day Tour du Haut Var, was in 2014 on the final stage of Paris-Nice.

Indeed, this was the 27-year-old's second overall win at the Tour du Haut Var. He followed his victory here in 2013 by winning the French National Championships road race that summer, something FDJ boss Marc Madiot will hope signals more good things to come, following a disappointing 2015 season hampered by illness.

He finished second on Saturday's first stage in Bagnols-en-Forêt behind Cannondale's Tom-Jelte Slagter, who won the uphill sprint to take the win and overnight lead. However, on Sunday's 206-kilometre long stage,

which started and finished in Draguignan, it was Vichot who came out on top.

Faced with six tough climbs, the Dutchman got caught on the wrong side of the day's big split and ended up 47 seconds adrift, while Vichot was part of a 25-man front group that contested the sprint finish. The Frenchman got the better of Movistar's Jesus Herrada and Ag2r's Alexis Vuillermoz on the line, to take the stage and the overall victory.

With top-10 finishes at GP La Marseillaise, Etoile des Bessèges and Trofeo Laigueglia already in 2016, Vichot will be hoping his early-season form continues.

Result

Winner: Arthur Vichot (Fra) FDJ 9:08.14;
2. Jesus Herrada (Esp) Movistar; 3. Diego Ulissi (Ita) Lampre-Merida; 4. Julien Simon (Fra) Cofidis; 5. Petr Vakov (Cz) Etixx-Quick Step; 6. Mikael Cherel (Fra) Ag2r-La Mondiale; 7. Francesco Gavazzi (Ita) Androni Giocattoli; 8. Giovanni Visconti (Ita) Movistar; 9. Maxime Bouet (Fra) Etixx-Quick Step; 10. Patrick Bevin (NZI) Cannondale all at same time.

Time trials

Sunday, February 21

Frome and District Wheelers 10 (Nunney, Somerset):

1. Liam Bromiley (Univ of Bath CC).....	20.41
2. B. Anstie (73 Degrees Bicycles).....	20.53
3. D. Jones (VC Walcot).....	21.01
4. J. Coward (ASFRA Racing Team).....	21.20
5. G. Parker (VC St Raphael).....	21.28
6. O. Hutchings (Primera Teamjobs).....	21.37
7. S. Cottingham (Bath CC).....	21.41
8. T. Chapman (Frome and Dist Wh).....	21.44
9. C. Rees (Gillingham and Dist Wh).....	21.52
10. P. Kibble (73 Degrees Bicycles).....	21.56
Women: Kate Baker (Performance Cycles).....	25.14
Juniors: Peter Kibble.....	21.56
Veterans on std: Greg Parker.....	+5.22
Team: 73 Degrees Bicycles (Ben Anstie, Peter Kibble, James Cartridge) ...	1:05.23

City Cycle Couriers RT 10 (Ivybridge, Devon):

1. Andrew Perkins (Mid Devon CC).....	22.00
2. G. Collins (Tanks Direct).....	22.13
3. G. Drew (RNRMC).....	22.40
4. M. Earle (Plymouth Corinthians CC).....	22.46
=5 J. McGowan (St. Austell Wh).....	22.47
=5 A. Green (St. Austell Wh).....	22.47
7. N. Todd (Tavistock Wh).....	22.50
8. P. Walshe (City Cycle Couriers RT).....	22.54
9. P. Bray (Plymouth Corinthians).....	23.29
10. A. Parnowski (Alltrax).....	23.52
Women: Crystal Spearman (NoPinz).....	24.36

Saturday, February 20

VC St Raphael Hardriders 16 (Wickham, Hants):

1. Chris Macnamara (Nuun-Sigma Sport RT).....	38.10
2. G. Chambers (Fareham Wh).....	38.40
3. D. Robson (Nopinz).....	39.15
4. J. Copeland (Fareham Wh).....	39.29
5. S. Berogna (VC St Raphael).....	40.10
6. C. Mitchell (a3crg).....	40.15
7. D. Dent (Wightlink-Offshore RT).....	40.46
8. T. Key (Southampton Univ CC).....	40.59
9. W. Flemming (VC Venta).....	41.00
10. S. Healy (Andover Wh).....	41.01
Road bikes: Kim Little (Gillingham & Dist Wh).....	41.22
Women: Simone Dailey (a3crg).....	44.47
Veterans on std: Chris Mcnamara.....	+5.00
Espoirs: Thomas Key.....	40.59

Coalville Wheelers 10 (Griffydham, Leicestershire):

1. Matt Woods (Performance Cycles CC).....	21.26
2. M. Sinclair (Lutterworth CC RT).....	21.52
3. T. Ward (Team Echelon-Rotor).....	21.54
4. J. Wale (Loughborough Students).....	21.55
5. A. Ward (Team Bottrill).....	22.24
6. P. Nicholls (Team PB Performance).....	22.26
7. J. Ramsbottom (Team Pedalpushers RT).....	22.29
8. J. Perkins (Team Bottrill).....	22.42
9. B. Charlton (Swinerton Cycles).....	23.10
10. C. Dyson (Beeston CC).....	23.15
Women: Melissa Denman (RPD Racing).....	27.49
Veteran 40-49: Julian Ramsbottom (Team Pedalpushers RT).....	22.29
Veteran 50-59: Barry Charlton (Swinerton Cycles).....	23.10
Veteran 60-69: Peter Tibbets (Ford CC).....	26.01

Road racing

Saturday, February 20

Velo29 Winter Series round 5 (Croft, N Yorks):

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Matthew Atkinson (Durham University CC) 1:13.57; 2. G. Benson (unattached) same time; 3. F. Rounds (unattached) +0.01; 4. N. Wallbank (Sunderland Clarion CC) +0.26; 5. W. Corbett (Manilla Cycling) +0.28; 6. J. Reed (Bike Box Allan) st; 7. B. Dransfield (Planet X-Northside) +0.31; 8. R. McMurtrie (Spokes RT) st; 9. G. Taylor (Prologue RT) +0.38; 10. T. Roper (Beacon Wh) st.
Women: 1. Angela Hibbs (Fusion RT) 40.49; 2. N. Moore (Squadra RT) +0.02; 3. B. Tate (Team WNT) same time; 4. S. Mottram (unattached) +0.19; 5. A. Kay (Nutcracker Racing) +0.32; 6. L. Atkinson-Wright (Albarosa CC) st.
Fourth cat: 1. Ross McMurtrie (Spokes RT) 40.42; 2. T. Kane (Manilla Cycling); 3. L. Beatty (Hawick CC); 4. E. Raddon (unattached); 5. B. Gifford (Spokes RT); 6. H. Harris (Muckle CC) all same time.

Cyclo-cross

Super Quaiich round 4

(Borrowstounness, Scotland):

Race A: 1. H. Johnston (Pro Vision Cycle Clothing) 59.42; 2. C. Gow (Tyneside Vagabonds CC) +0.40; 3. G. McCrae (Leslie Bike Shop) +0.52; 4. S. Flynn (Edinburgh RC) +0.54; 5. G. Macdonald (Hope Factory Racing) +2.14; 6. S. Pryde (Deeside Thistle CC) +2.24.

Race B: 1. N. Kemp (Glasgow Nightingale CCO) 1:07.58; 2. S. MacLuskie (VC Glasgow South) +0.10; 3. I. Elliott (West Lothian Clarion) +0.17; 4. S. Kenny (West Lothian Clarion) +0.52; 5. R. Bloor (Edinburgh RC) +2.28; 6. J. Fitzgerald (Ronde CC) +3.06.



Rider of the week

Liam Bromiley (University of Bath CC)

Frome and District Wh 10 (Nunney, Somerset)

Bromiley was limited by his student budget to a road bike with tribars, but it didn't impede his progress towards a classy win in a time of 20.41, edging out Ben Anstie (73 Degrees Bicycles) by 12 seconds.

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Dr Hutch

For new and different technology to be accepted, first it must be old and normal, argues the Doc...

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When I was a student, one of my club-mates bought a new bike. In a student club, a new bike was always an event. We all called by his room to inspect it. I didn't know it at the time, but this procedure was exactly the same as I'd later experience going to look at someone's new baby.

As is the case with a new baby, we collectively buried our severe misgivings about its appearance, and told him it looked wonderful.

The bike's problem was that he'd had it stove-enamelled. This was briefly fashionable in the 1990s, and had the effect of making our friend's expensive new bike look as if he'd thrown it together from some parts he had left over after installing an Aga. (He later had a child of whom, frankly, you could have said the same.)

The rest of us knew what we liked, and we didn't like this. We knew with such certainty, because like all cyclists, we had a very strong aesthetic sensibility. The fact that stove-enamelling was 'fashionable' was of no consequence to us. We were above such things. We were wise enough to know that our clubmate had fallen for the whispering of a charming frame-builder who had presumably, in turn, fallen for the whispering of someone with a stove-enamelling machine to sell. We were interested only in

whether things looked 'right'. And when I say 'right', I really mean 'normal'. When I say 'normal' I mean we were as reactionary and conservative a bunch of twenty-somethings as you could ever hope to meet.

We were not unusual, then or now. All bike riders are like that. As a group we really don't like change. We think we do — are we not progressive? Innovative? Free-thinking? Of course. Right up to the point where we see something that doesn't look normal. I remember the howls of outrage and disgust that greeted the first road bikes with sloping top-tubes. Lighter than horizontal tubes? Yes. Stiffer? Yes. Different? Oh, my god, the horror.

Resisting the inevitable

How does something become normal? Simple. It hangs around for long enough. The older you are, the longer it needs to hang around. I reckon it's about 30 per cent of the time you've been a cyclist. What I like in a modern bike is

Acts of Cycling Stupidity

Mrs. Doc reports an event she saw while running across Grantchester Meadow, near Cambridge.

There were several walkers and cyclists using a shared path, which crossed a small, narrow wooden bridge. Suddenly, a youth on a bike came roaring along the path a high speed. As he approached the bridge, a woman in her eighties was just about to start crossing from the other side. "Move!" shouted the youth, riding straight towards her.

His front wheel hit the bridge, and skidded. He landed with a bang audible across the city. And his front wheel was buckled beyond hope of repair.

"Excuse me, dearie," said the woman, stepping politely over his prostrate form.

In future I shall be equipping Mrs. Doc with a body camera to be worn on all occasions. I can't afford to miss any future karmic occurrences of quite this quality. The rider was, incidentally, unhurt.



whatever the big bike companies started telling me I ought to like around 2009.

My friend Bernard was a cyclist long before I was — for him it takes much longer. For instance, he swears he'd rather have a sore back than use an upward-sloping stem. And that's exactly how it is.

“He'd thrown it together from some parts he had left over after installing an Aga”



His back hurts like a gravedigger's, but his stem is as horizontal as Eddy Merckx's. I'll start liking disc brakes around 2020, but I reckon Bernie will hold out until 2040.

Once something has been around long enough that it looks normal, and especially after we've finally bought it, you can be confident we'll find a reason why that's also 'best'. Sloping top tubes, as I say, were lighter and stiffer. But when this thing that definitely isn't fashion moved back towards horizontal top tubes, we all persuaded ourselves that they were stronger. (And also, of course, that stronger was more important than lighter and stiffer. We're not complete idiots.)

Under the influence

Back in the 1990s, all it would have taken would have been for Laurent Jalabert to turn up to the Tour de France on a stove-enamelled bike for, say, four years, and I promise you that, miraculously, not only would we all have bought them, we'd quickly have worked out why they were better too.

But all the same, thank God it never happened.



How to... Ride into a pothole

Since our previous 'How to... Fix a pothole' seems not to have had the revolutionary effect we hoped for, we offer instead some thoughts on how best to ride into one.

The first step in riding into a pothole is to look at it. Looking at a pothole is how you activate the tractor beam that draws you inexorably in. Incidentally, the same effect is present with broken glass, horse crap, and (for mountain bikers) trees.

When your wheel hits the hole, swear loudly. It won't help, but it's the only thing about the experience you might enjoy. I'd strongly suggest that your next move not be 'fall off'. Suing the council is not nearly as much fun as many people have claimed, and is rewarding only if you are incredibly excited by the thought of £200 in five year's time, and quite enjoy breaking bones anyway.

Observe how very quickly the front tyre deflates. When you remove the inner tube you'll find two elegant 'snakebite' punctures, from the rim bashing straight through to the tyre carcass. While you have the tyre off, you'll be able to note how the very fast deflation allowed the pothole to wreck the rim as well.

When you finally get home, report the hole to as many organisations as you can think of. Then you'll be able to angrily admire it for the next two years, as it grows unmolested by the council, and gobbles more bicycles.

Finally it will get fixed. You'll be happy. Until, after the first rain shower, all the cheap tar washes out of it, and you crash into it all over again.



Killer kilo: Winnats Pass is
1,000m of pain



Winnats Pass

The Peak District's most famous climb is a legendary challenge

Chris Sidwells

Some hills are naturally quantified by their numbers. But not Winnats Pass. The High Peak climb near Castleton is back-breakingly steep, over 1,000 metres in length, and always windy. What's more, the wind is always head on. Its name is short for Windy Gates, and it's a rite of passage for any self-respecting British cyclist, having been made famous by two great British races.

Approach Winnats from the Hope Valley and it's a gash in the bright green plateau ahead. It's only when you get close that an improbable ribbon of tarmac wriggling up a steep-sided valley is revealed.

Geologists thought Winnats was a collapsed cavern. There are other caverns nearby, all created by water

dissolving limestone, and it was presumed that the roof of this one just fell in. The new theory is rather more exotic. Winnats was formed from a fissure in the original coral reef that turned into limestone. You can see fragments of the original coral in a huge block of limestone at the top of Winnats called Windy Knoll. Erosion, particularly during the Ice Age, widened the fissure to create the gorge we see today.

Time-honoured climb

Winnats has been a challenge for those on two wheels ever since the first days of cycling clubs. Part of the Peak District National Park, it is surrounded by industrial towns and cities, and is a place that people have escaped to for years. Club runs to Castleton, the pretty town at the foot of the climb, would include the challenge of climbing Winnats, and its reputation grew until it was one of the first hills chosen to host the National Hill-Climb Championships.

That was in 1947, when Vic Clarke of Coventry CC won in 3.23.8 on a 983-yard

course. That's still one of the fastest times up Winnats. There's a fascinating interview with Vic, and with other hill-climb champions, in Paul Jones's book *A Corinthian Endeavour*. The championships returned to Winnats eight times after that, but after 1977 difficulty closing the road for such an event prevented more titles being decided there.

When the champs were there, Winnats became a galleried amphitheatre of noise, as thousands of club riders flocked to encourage the contestants. In 1963 they were even entertained pre-race by the national tandem sprint champions Eric Thompson and Geoff Cooke, who logged up on a touring tandem.

The other race Winnats Pass is associated with is the Tour of the Peak, first run in 1943. It was 90 miles long, two laps of a big circuit that included the climb of Mam Tor. But when the road over Mam Tor was destroyed in 1979 due to a landslide, the course changed and over the years used a number of other hills, including Winnats Pass. The last Tour of the Peak race was held in 2005.

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